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The 1975 Refugees: Their First Five Years in America

by Reginald P. Baker and David S. North

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Reginald P. Baker

and

David S. North

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PREFACE

This study grew out of a chance remark made by Julia Vadala Taft, who directed the resettlement of the 1975 refugees. While working with David Ford and David North on a retrospective study of the U.S refugee resettlement effort[1] she mentioned a data file that had been constructed from administrative records and interviews with each of the refugees processed through the stateside camps in 1975. "Somebody should do something with all that material," she said.

With the help of Bill Dixon of the Office of Data Processing, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), we located documentation for a tape file called, "The 1975 Indochinese Evacuee Master File." The documentation indicated that the file contained a wealth of demographic and resettlement data. The data records did not contain Social Security Numbers (SSNs), a disappointment since we had hoped to do a study that traced the refugees' economic performance through the study of earnings data from the Social Security Administration. Fortunately, the file did contain Alien Registration Numbers (A-Numbers) issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Alien Registration cards,

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[1] Julia Vadala Taft, David S. North, David A. Ford, Refugee Resettlement in the U.S.: Time for a New Focus. New Trans-Century Foundation. Washington, 1979.

filed by refugees in 1978, 1979, and 1980 were also available on tape and contained both A-Numbers and SSNs. We decided to use the registration card data as a Rosetta stone to link the three files. The resulting data base, we felt, could be used to explore in depth the characteristics of the 1975 cohort, and their experiences in the U.S. It was a good idea, but implementing it took much more time, energy, patience, political skill, and money than we had anticipated.

Funding for the project was provided by the Social and Behavioral Sciences Branch of the Center for Population Research within the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), DHHS. When the NICHD money was gone and work remained, we received support from our respective employers, Data Use and Access Laboratories (DUALabs) and the New TransCentury Foundation.

The project could not have been completed without the help of a number of people in several different federal agencies. Drs. Wendy Baldwin and Earl Hyuck of NICHD were cooperative and patient in the extreme with a project that continually missed its deadlines. A number of people at the Social Security Administration including Warren Buckler, Harold Grossman, Lois Alexander, Cress Smith, and Ada Ennis all helped in different ways with the retrieval and tabulation of the earnings data in the SSA files. Dr. Frederick Scheuren

of the Internal Revenue Service also deserves thanks for expediting the disclosure review of our SSA tabulations. A particular debt is owed to Bill Dixon of DHHS (who preserved the Evacuee data -- not because it was his responsiblity but only because he understood their value) and Linda Gordon (who changed jobs during this project and was helpful in both -- at INS and the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), DHHS). Finally, there is Julia Taft to whom we owe a special debt for having set us in motion in the first place.

Although it was harder than we expected, we were able to accomplish most of what we set out to do. We showed that it was possible, if difficult, to get the cooperation of six government agencies for a project that offered little by way of direct or immediate benefit to their objectives. All are to be commended for their sense of service and appreciation of the potential value of what we were trying to accomplish.

We learned some important and useful things about the the resettlement of the 1975 cohort. We have been able to describe, at a somewhat regrettable distance, the efforts of a first-wave refugee population as they struggled through their first five years in that big buzzing confusion, the United States of America. Perhaps this account of this cohort of refugees, most of whom were relatively well

prepared for life in the U.S., will help policymakers as they plan to assist other groups of refugees. We hope so. If the world were different (better), this study would not be needed. Unfortunately, such is not the case.

CHAPTER 1: THE CONTEXT

The study is written within two general contexts, a policy context (what the nation should do about refugees) and a research context (how other scholars are studying them). The policy context, in turn, can be divided into two segments, the external, or foreign relations setting, and the internal, or domestic policy environment.

A. The Foreign Policy Context

At the broadest level within the foreign policy framework is the sad fact that we live in a refugee-producing world. Since the beginning of history, human conflict has created refugees. During the last two decades, as the artificial peace of the colonial period has given way to the bitter rivalries of the emerging Third World, the numbers and visiblity of refugees have increased dramatically.

The United States response to the proliferation of refugees provides a narrower context. How many will the United States accept, and from which of the many refugee populations? These macro admissions questions are now organized into annual consultations between the State Department, on one hand, and the Congressional Judiciary Committees on the other. When Saigon fell in 1975 there was no such consultation. The Ford Administration simply decided to rescue as many of our allies as we could, and we did so

under Dunkirk-like conditions.

In general, the U.S. does not welcome refugees. We do, however, have a specialized interest in those who are our defeated allies in our world-wide struggle against Communism.[1] The 1975 cohort is a perfect example of refugees regarded as refugees by the U.S. government. Still, the nation's decision-makers are less welcoming to refugees today than in the recent past. There were 166,727 Indochinese admitted in FY80, 132,447 in FY81, 73,327 in FY82, and 36,136 in FY83.

Even with agreement on the number of refugees to admit to the U.S., other important questions remain. For example, within the framework of our macro admissions policy, which individuals among the acceptable refugee populations should we admit? Admission criteria vary and are based on a broad set of political, economic, and moral principles. Thus, the Ford Administration made its macro admissions decisions on a different basis than the Reagan Administration. In 1975, those who made it out of Vietnam alive and wanted to come to the U.S. were admitted. Today, there are complex screening techniques, priorities and procedures, operating

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[1]We accept only those we define as our allies in our battles with international Communism, not just any victim of Communist repression. A totally apolitical Vietnamese (perhaps a babe in arms) is accepted as a refugee while a genuine political refugee fleeing from Chinese or Yugoslav Communism is not generally viewed as a refugee.

in somewhat the same manner as in the immigrant screening process.

Despite careful screening procedures, the U.S. today seems to be admitting a considerably less productive group of refugees than in 1975. This is happening because a crumbling society's elite are always the first to flee. They have the means to do so and the most to lose by staying. Refugees in the later years are generally less educated, less skilled, less likely to know English, and less likely to have extensive contact with the outside world.

Even after deciding how many and which individuals should be admitted, we face the difficult question of how best to prepare incoming refugees for resettlement. How can we best make use of the time that refugees spend in processing camps before they come to the U.S.? Currently the U.S., wisely we think, hires teachers to provide English language training and orientation programs to the refugees. It does not, however, use the camps to provide dental care or much in the way of preventive medicine.

As this is written, in 1984, the Department of State maintains several camps for Indochinese refugees who have been selected for admission to the U.S. These refugees are moved from their first asylum camps to processing centers such as the one in Bataan, the Phillipines, where they spend several months in preparation for the transition

to American life. Most, but not all, Indochinese refugees go through the processing centers; none of the 1975 refugees had a comparable overseas experience.

B. The Domestic Policy Context

Domestic policy issues in the refugee field can be summarized as follows:

- Where should refugees be placed geographically? (And what, if anything, can be done about secondary migration away from the place of initial settlement?)
- What institutions should be assigned the task of aiding refugees?
- What services should be delivered to refugees, and in what intensity, combination, sequence, and duration?
- What arrangements should be made to assist refugees financially until they can make their own way in the United States?

1. Initial Placement. This question is raised most often in southern California. There has been a substantial secondary migration of Indochinese refugees to that region from elsewhere in the nation, creating what some local officials regard as an undue concentration of refugees and an overloading of the social service systems. This secondary migration stemmed from two causes.

First, U.S. policy in 1975 was to scatter refugees across the nation, not only to avoid concentrations, but to take advantage of far-flung networks potentially interested

in the refugees. Some of the church-based voluntary agencies (volags), for example, have many of their strongest churches in the northern third of the country, but the members of these congregations are more adjusted to the local temperatures than are the Indochinese. The second cause was the attractiveness of southern California, where the weather is warm, where there are large concentrations of other Indochinese, and where the welfare benefits are among the highest in the nation. Had there been no scatter policy, or had southern California not been so attractive to the Indochinese, there would be no secondary migration to southern California.

2. Resettlement Agencies. The question of what institutions should be assigned the care of refugees is essentially a public sector versus private sector debate. Most disadvantaged persons in the U.S. are cared for by public agencies. Refugees, although we hope them to be disadvantaged only temporarily, are assigned initially to the volags for their reception and placement. Subsequent services, such as cash assistance, English language training and vocational training are generally provided by the public sector. Where should the lines be drawn in this field? And are some of the volags more skilled than others?

3. Refugee Services. The third of the domestic policy questions is perhaps the most important. What services should be provided to refugees after they arrive? The

range of services provided to refugees was once a wide one (including many supportive and counselling services); in recent years, the emphasis has been on those services that will help potentially employable refugees secure jobs, i.e., training in the English language, jobs placement services, and sometimes vocational training.

4. Financial Support. The fourth, and most hotly discussed of the domestic policy questions deals with cash assistance for refugees. There is the predictable range of opinion on the subject from those who want to spend next to nothing to those who are supportive in the extreme. Interestingly, some of the harshest critics of a liberal welfare policy are found among European immigrants and former refugees who administer volags responsible for refugee resettlement. They argue that no such programs were available when <u>they</u> arrived. Others within the volags, particularly younger staff members and those who have worked with refugees in the field, argue that refugees are a substantially disadvantaged population and that they need and deserve a full-time language and vocational training program until they can compete in the U.S. labor market.

It should be remembered that refugees have access to more financial assistance than other Americans. This, in itself, is a recognition of their disadvantaged status. First, there is the reception and placement program for

refugees, mounted by the volags and funded by the Department of State at the (current) rate of $525 or $560 per refugee.[2] These funds provide food, clothing, housing, and supportive services to refugees during their first few weeks in the country. The second collection of special services are the various training programs, largely in English, and job-related, administered by the states, funded by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The third, and more controversial program provides cash assistance to refugees. These benefits are set at the same levels as those for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), a joint federal-state program with benefit levels varying state by state. There is, however, a major difference between Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and AFDC. RCA is available to single adults, and to childless couples while AFDC is not. Further, while some states require an absent or handicapped spouse before AFDC payments may be made; RCA benefits can be paid to intact, healthy families. These special rules for the non-categorically eligible (to use the DHHS jargon) applied without a time limitation until April 1, 1981 when a three-year limit was imposed by the Refugee Act of 1980. Thus, these rules applied throughout the period we studied. The three-year period was further reduced

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[2]Indochinese and other non-European refugees are subsidized at this rate; European refugees' grants are $365 or $390 each.

to 18 months by the Reagan Administration on April 1, 1982. After 18 months, refugees are eligible for AFDC only if they meet the categorical (i.e., family composition) criteria.

In addition to their special, time-limited access to RCA, refugees are eligible under the same conditions as other legal residents to Food Stamps, the most widespread of the income transfer programs, and to Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which helps blind, disabled and elderly low-income persons. Refugees are also eligible on the same basis as other residents to work-related programs, unemployment insurance, and after a number of years, Social Security.

While there is a current controversy over welfare benefits to refugees,[3] the 1975 cohort did not create the controversy. In fact, its utilization of cash benefits was much less pronounced than the utilization by later, more disadvantaged cohorts of Indochinese refugees.

C. Policy Relevance of This Research

The results of the research presented here have relevance in some of these policy contexts but not in others. We present extensive data on the demographic, educational,

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[3]See, for example, the statements of Nan Borton and Joyce Schuman in Annual Refugee Consultation for 1982, Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, 97th Congress, 1st Session, September 22, 1981 (Washington: USGPO 1982), Serial No. J-97-59.

and vocational characteristics of the 1975 cohort as well as describing how these variables intereact, years later, with the American society and economy. Should the U.S. opt to use educational and occupational background in admissions decisions, this study may provide some insight. Our research also has focused on secondary migration -- who moved and from where to where. And while we can only guess at why individuals made their decisions to leave or stay, comparisons of the characteristics of movers versus stayers and benefit levels in sender states versus receiving states[4] suggest some general findings with policy implications.

Unfortunately, other gaps in our data base prevent us from speaking to several important policy issues. We know nothing of the language and vocational training provided to individual 1975 refugees. We can describe the types of individuals who have resettled themselves successfully in American society. We can also describe those whose resettlement has been more gradual or even incomplete. What we cannot do is evaluate the impact of specific intervention strategies. We can say for sure what refugees did, but not why.

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[4]A refugee family moving from Texas to California in 1979, for example, went from a state with an average monthly AFDC or RCA benefit of $108 to one with an average benefit of $341 per family. For more data on state-by-state benefit levels, see Social Security Administration, Social Security Bulletin, Annual Statistical Supplement, 1980 (Washington: USGPO), Table 177.

D. The Research Context

This is not, needless to say, the only study of Indochinese refugees. Nor is it the first study of the adjustment of newly-arrived immigrants to American ways. Rather, the work reported here is both a complement and a supplement to work of a number of other scholars. To help show how our work fits in this research context, it is useful to describe briefly the different categories of researchers currently working in this field. They include:

- the sympathizers (and describers)
- the human capitalists
- the nose-counters
- the cost-counters
- the process people
- the government records types
- the survey researchers
- the analysts

The **sympathizers** write warmly and with first-hand information about the experiences of the refugees. Their style is impressionistic and they use more adjectives than statistics. They take an historical and sometimes anecdotal approach.

The **human capitalists**, on the other hand, use many

statistics and few adjectives. They feel that a careful study of known, quantifiable variables (such as years of education and years of work experience) can tell us a great deal about the likely economic adjustment of immigrant populations. Barry Chiswick, with his continuing interest in the analysis of data on earnings of the foreign born, is a leader in the field.[5]

From the human capitalist viewpoint, what happens to refugees before they arrive is much more important than what happens to them after they get to the U.S. In policy terms, this would suggest that whom we admit is more important than the services we provide after admission. In any case, this report offers much grist for the human capital mills.

The **nose-counters** produce statistical data but little analysis. In this category are the compilers of the annual reports of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), which includes data on the number, type, and characteristics of aliens admitted, the Bureau of the Census, which has data on the Vietnamese from the 1980 census, and Opportunity Systems, Inc., which has conducted a number of telephone surveys of various groups of Indochinese refugees for the

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[5]See, for example, Barry R. Chiswick, "The Economic Progress of Immigrants: Some Apparently Universal Patterns," in William Fellner, ed., Contemporary Economic Problems, 1979 (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1979).

Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), DHHS.[6]

The **cost-counters** are largely clustered in the General Accounting Office and write reports with paragraph-long titles often beginning "More Needs to be Done About...." Their focus is primariily on how much programs cost and what they are producing. Their principal methodology is the files search.[7]

The **process people**, and one of our authors has been in this field, pay attention to institutional arrangements, service delivery systems, and, where possible, the results thereof. This kind of program evaluation is useful even if it only gives the Government a better understanding of what it is funding. Often it can do more.
ORR has designed a number of complementary field studies covering such aspects of resettlement as the role of the states and the role of English language training (ELT).

What really needs to be done in the process evaluation field is to study what difference, if any, is caused by

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[6]These surveys are conducted in waves with a new wave approximately every six months.

[7]See, for example, Comptroller General of the U.S., Report to the Congress: Improved Overseas Medical Exams and Treatment Can Reduce Serious Disease in Indochinese Refugees Entering the U.S. (Washington: U.S. General Accounting Office, August 1982). See also such related works as Mark Tajima, Joseph Langlois, and Ronald Gibbs, Analysis of San Diego and San Francisco County Data on the Length of Time Indochinese Refugees Have Been in the U.S. Prior to Application for Public Assistance,(Washington: National Association of Counties Research, Inc., September 1981).

different government approaches to refugee services. Is substantial up-front provision of orientation, counseling, ELT, and vocational training, accompanied by substantial subsistence payments, cost-effective? Does it make a difference in the refugees' lives a year or several years later? We are hopeful that the about-to-be completed, ORR-funded research project on self-sufficiency will provide useful answers to these questions.

In terms of research techniques, this study is one of the few that relies solely on **government records** for data. We used the machine-readable files created during the 1975 camp operations, matched them with INS annual registration data for the years 1978, 1979, and 1980, and then matched this enriched file with Social Security Administration (SSA) earnings data for the years 1976, 1977, 1978, and 1979.

Linda Gordon of ORR and Robert Bach of the State University of New York at Binghamton pioneered in the use of INS registration card data for refugees.[8] Harold Grossman of the

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[8]See Linda Gordon, "Southeast Asian Refugees in the United States: Dispersal and Concentration," a paper prepared for the meetings of the Southwest Social Science Association, March 17-20, 1982, San Antonio, Texas; Linda Gordon, "Settlement Patterns of Indochinese Refugees in the United States," INS Reporter, Spring, 1980; and Robert L. Bach, Comparative Labor Market Experiences of Mexican, Cuban, and Indochinese Immigrants, preliminary report prepared for the workshop on the "Implications of International Migration for the United States," Bethesda, MD, November 15-17, 1981.

Social Security Administration has been using Social Security earnings data to track the economic progress of the Indochinese refugees.[9] Earlier, one of the authors of this study had linked INS Alien Registration data and SSA earnings data, if crudely, in a study of the economic adjustment of the 1970 cohort of legal immigrants.[10] The basic utility of longitudinal SSA earnings data for tracing the economic progress of other populations has been well established.[11]

There are advantages and disadvantages of working with these data. They are removed from the first-hand experience noted by the sympathizers, but they do record, in a consistent manner, wages recorded with the government (the SSA data) and questions answered by refugees at specific points in time (the camp data, and the INS registration reports). Further, they offer useful longitudinal data, a dimension missing from Census reports.

Then there are the **survey researchers**, who seek their

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[9]Harold Grossman, "OASDI-Covered Earnings of Indochina Refugees, 1975," Social Security Bulletin, June 1978; "OASDI-Covered Earnings of Indochina Refugees, 1976," Social Security Bulletin, March 1979; and "Socioeconomic Status of Indochinese Refugees in the United States: Progress and Problems," Social Security Bulletin, October 1980.

[10]David S. North, Immigrants and the American Labor Market (Washington: New TransCentury Foundation, 1970), and Seven Years Later: The Experiences of the 1970 Cohort of Immigrants in the U.S. Labor Market (Washington: New TransCentury Foundation, 1978).

[11]See, for example, WESTAT, Inc., Continuous Longitudinal Manpower Survey, Net Impact Report No. 1, Impact on 1977 Earnings of New FY1976 CETA Enrollees in Selected Program Activities (Rockville, MD: WESTAT, Inc., 1981).

information in a structured way directly from the refugees. While there have been other surveys of refugees, probably the most exhaustive is that of Bruce Dunning of the Bureau of Social Science Research conducted for SSA.[12] His study group consisted of 555 Vietnamese nationals aged 18 and over who had settled in the U.S. between 1975 and 1979. The survey was conducted in three sites: Los Angeles and Orange Counties, California; Houston, Texas; and New Orleans, Louisiana. Since our study deals with many of the same variables as Dunning's (demographic characteristics, overseas experiences, location in the U.S., and earnings in the U.S.) we provide a number of cross references to his work.

In addition, a research team from Auburn University, headed by Paul Starr, surveyed 349 Vietnamese heads of household in nine cities in northern California and along the central Gulf Coast of the U.S. for data on their economic, psychological, and social adjustment.[13]

Finally, there are **the analysts,** a handful of scholars looking at the broad sweep of refugee resettlement, such

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[12]Bruce B. Dunning, Survey of the Social, Psychological, and Economic Adaptation of Vietnamese Refugees in the U.S., 1975-1979 (Washington: Bureau of Social Science Research, January 1982).

[13]Paul D. Starr, et. al., "Vietnamese Refugees in America: The Dynamics of Social Psychological and Economic Adaption," in Nguyen Manh Hung and G. H. Stopp, Jr., eds., Indochinese Refugees in America (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981).

as Barry Stein of the Refugee Policy Group,[14] Gary Rubin, who has also written for the Policy Group,[15] and David Haines of ORR.[16] We hope that our study will be grist for their mills, too.

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Barry N. Stein, "Refugee Resettlement Programs and Techniques: A Research Report Submitted to the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy", (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, September 1980).Also, "Refugee Issues: Current Status and Directions for the Future," a paper for the Refugee Policy Group (Washington: RPG, April 1982).

[15]David Haines, Dorothy Rutherford, and Patrick Thomas, "Family and Community Among Vietnamese Refugees," International Migration Review 15(1) (Spring, 1981).

[16]David R. Howell, "Refugee Resettlement and Public Policy: A Role for Anthropology," Anthropological Quarterly 55 (3), July 1982 (Revised Edition.)

CHAPTER 2: A PORTRAIT OF THE 1975 COHORT

One had to have been 36 years old in 1975 to have lived at a time when there were no wars or revolutions in Indochina. Nineteen thirty-nine was the last full year of peace in what was then a French colony. Following the fall of France in 1940, the Vichy Government ceded Indochina to the Japanese, who remained throughout World War II.

Immediately after the War, the occupying Japanese army was replaced by first the British and Chinese Nationalists, and later the French. Indochinese nationalists, who had waged a continuing underground war against the Japanese, continued to resist government by foreign powers. In 1954, the French, defeated in the battle of Dien Bien Phu, withdrew from Indochina leaving behind three nations: Laos and Cambodia in the interior, and Vietnam.

Internal struggles as to who should control the new government of Vietnam were quick in coming. Soon there were two Vietnams, North Vietnam controlled by a Communist faction from the nationalist movement, and South Vietnam controlled by military regimes allied at first with the French and later the United States. Warfare continued as each side sought to extend and/or control portions of the small country.

By the early 1960's, most of the warfare in Indochina

was taking place in South Vietnam. The U.S. military presence there that began with only a handful of advisors had grown to over a half a million troops by 1969. Beginning in the early 1970s, these troops were gradually withdrawn, and in April 1975 the anti-Communist forces succumbed to the combined strength of the Viet Cong revolutionaries and the regular army of North Vietnam.

The United States had made a substantial commitment to our allies in Indochina and lost. Millions of Americans had worked or fought in Vietnam; the U.S. poured tens of billions of dollars into the conflict; and most of the social and political energies of a generation of Americans were spent debating our role in that war. Fearing a Communist blood bath (a fear that turned out to be all too well-founded in Cambodia, if not Vietnam), the U.S. welcomed its defeated allies as refugees.

A. Leaving Vietnam

Although the ultimate defeat of the pro-Western government of Vietnam probably could have been predicted for two decades, when Saigon fell it fell quickly. Neither the U.S. nor the South Vietnamese were prepared. Despite the approaching defeat, virtually no refugees fled Vietnam in the first three months of 1975. Few were able to leave once the Communist forces took the South. Over 90 percent of those

who left Vietnam in 1975 left in April, within two weeks of the fall of Saigon.

The Vietnamese who managed to escape in the last days of Saigon were not a cross-section of the population. Those who left were likely to be among those with a great deal to lose and access to a means of flight: those with ties to the U.S., those of prominence, those with money. There is always a flight of the fittest at such times; the halt and the blind generally do not get seats on the last plane out.

Not all those fleeing in 1975, however, belonged to the elite. Many were swept up in the tide of events. For example, within the military, members of the Navy and the Air Force were proportionately better represented than those in the far larger Vietnamese Army, probably because the exodus was mostly by air and sea. Similarly, many non-elite fisherfolk escaped since their barriers to travel were minimal.

This report is about the first wave of those refugees, those who left during calendar year 1975. The balance of this chapter is organized into four sections. Section B discusses the basic demographics of this population; Section C, the educational background and language abilities of the refugees; Section D, their vocational background

in Indochina; and Section E, their experience in the stateside camps. The analysis is based almost totally on data in the Evacuee Master File.

B. Demographic Profile

1. Nation of Origin. The 1975 refugees were predominantly Vietnamese nationals; 94.6 percent were from that nation, 4.2 percent from Cambodia, and .4 percent from elsewhere. A small group, less than one percent, were identified as Americans, presumably children and spouses of U.S. servicemen or children born in the camps.

This predominance of Vietnamese was a distinguishing feature of the 1975 cohort. In later years, the percentage of Vietnamese nationals among the incoming refugees declined as a broader range of persons fled from what had been Indochina. In 1981, for example, only about half of the refugees arriving from Southeast Asia were from Vietnam. The balance were mostly from Cambodia along with a large number of Laotians (about 16 percent of the total).[17] Within these national groups two ethnic groups, the Hmong and the ethnic Chinese, though very prominent today were few in number in the 1975

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[17]Percentages noted are for refugees approved for admission from the three nations of Southeast Asia, from Office of Refugee Resettlement, Report to the Congress, Refugee Resettlement Program (Washington: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, January 31, 1982), Table 6.

cohort.

Thus this first wave was a much more homogeneous group than later waves. As we shall see later, it also posed somewhat less of a challenge to refugee-aid organizations than some of the later arrivals.

2. Sex. A substantial majority of the 1975 evacuees (about 55 percent) were male. By comparison, the host population of the United States in 1975 was only 49 percent male. The arriving group of legal immigrants in that same year was 46.8 percent male. In later years the percentage of males among Indochinese refugees has climbed even higher. In 1982, for example, 58.4 percent of those arriving were males.

An unusually high proportion of males in a refugee population might suggest an eventual high labor force participation rate and low unadjusted birth rate. Men are more likely to be in the labor force than women and they are less likely to have babies. The male-female ratio for the 1975 cohort appeared to favor the resettlement process, although not as much as it did the Hungarians who arrived in 1957 (60 percent male).

3. Marital Status. A slight majority (50.6 percent) of refugees 15 years and older for whom data are available were single and had never been married at the time of the camp interview. Virtually all the rest were married. Only

0.3 percent, all women, were noted as divorced, while less than 0.1 percent were recorded as widowed, again all women. No marriage data were available on about 20 percent of the group.

The U.S. population (i.e., those 15 years of age and older) was much more likely to be married than the refugees. According to the 1970 Census, for example, about 58 percent of the eligible U.S. population was married, 26 percent single, and 13 percent divorced or widowed.[18] However, these U.S. data are only roughly comparable. As we shall note below, the 1975 refugees were much younger than the U.S population, and the incidence of marriage increases (for refugees and other populations) with age. The median age of all 125,000 refugees was only 19.7 years in 1975. The median age of the resident U.S. population at the same time was 28.8.[19]

4. Head of Family. The overwhelming majority (83 percent) of refugee families were headed by men. More than a third of these male-headed families, however, were actually single males who migrated alone. The 17 percent of families headed by women compares to 13.1 percent female headed families for the U.S. population as a whole in 1976, and to 33 percent female-headed families within the U.S.

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[18] Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1981, Table 54.
[19] Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1977, Table 3.

Black and other population the same year.[20]

5. Age Distribution. The 1975 refugees included a disproportionate number of young adults (when compared to the U.S. population). However, as Table 1 shows, the concentration of young adults was even more pronounced among later Indochinese arrivals such as those of 1982, than it was among the 1975 cohort. Of the U.S. male population in 1970, 30 percent were between the ages of 15 and 34. In contrast, 45.7 percent of the 1975 male refugees and 52.8 percent of the 1982 male refugees were in this same age group. This combination of a high proportion of young adults, a high male-female ratio, and a relatively low marriage rate would be expected to produce a high labor force participation rate.

The remarkably small percentage of people over age 65, and of those in the near retirement age group (55-64) is also worthy of note. The 1975 and the 1982 cohorts from Indochina have considerably different age distributions than another refugee population in the U.S., the Soviet Jews. Whereas less than one percent of the 1975 and 1981 Indochinese refugees were age 65 and over, fully 19.7 percent of Soviet refugees arriving in the first quarter of 1981 were in that category.[21]

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[20] Ibid., Tables 56 and 59.
[21] Statistical Abstract, Vol. XXII, No. 1 (First Quarter, 1981,) p. 10, HIAS, New York.

TABLE 1

Age-Sex Distribution of the 1975 Refugees, Arriving FY 1982 Southeast Asian Refugees, and 1970 U.S. Population
(as percents)

AGE GROUP	MALE			FEMALE			TOTAL		
	1975 REFUGEE	1982 REFUGEE	1970 U.S.	1975 REFUGEE	1982 REFUGEE	1970 U.S.	1975 REFUGEE	1982 REFUGEE	1970 U.S.
Under 5	12.1%	10.5%	8.8%	13.9%	13.4%	8.1%	12.9%	11.7%	8.4%
5-9	12.6	10.8	10.3	13.8	11.8	9.4	13.1	11.2	9.8
10-14	11.4	12.9	10.7	12.2	11.7	9.8	11.8	12.4	10.2
15-19	12.4	16.1	9.7	12.5	12.7	9.1	12.5	14.7	9.4
20-24	14.8	17.6	8.0	11.4	14.2	8.1	13.2	16.1	8.1
25-34	18.5	19.1	12.4	16.3	20.1	12.2	17.6	19.5	12.2
35-44	9.6	7.3	11.4	9.3	7.5	11.4	9.4	7.4	11.4
45-54	5.3	3.3	11.3	5.4	4.1	11.5	5.4	3.7	11.5
55-64	2.2	1.5	8.9	3.4	2.6	9.4	2.8	2.0	9.1
65 & Over	0.9	0.9	8.5	1.7	1.9	11.1	1.3	1.3	9.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	67,743	42,273	98,426,000	55,848	30,117	104,309,000	123,591	72,390	203,235,000

Sources: Data on 1975 refugees from Evacuee Master File. Data on FY 1982 arriving Southeast Asian refugees computed from Office of Refugee Resettlement, "Monthly Data Reports for September, 1982." Age distribution of U.S. population derived from Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1981, Table 29.

Note: Missing cases eliminated for 1975 refugees, as follows: 179 males, 239 females.

6. Religion. One of the first things we noticed when we began to work with the Evacuee File was that it reported the religion of refugees, a subject that the U.S. Government routinely avoids. We did not know at the time whether it would be useful, but the question was asked, and the data were available. The choices offered and the responses of those aged 15 and over are as follows:

Religions of the 1975 Cohort

Buddhist	34.3%
Catholic	34.2
Protestant	4.6
Other	3.2
None	.1

A similar distribution by sex showed about the same pattern although there were more more Catholic women than Buddhist women (9,7776 versus 8,995) and fewer Catholic men than Buddhist men by about the same margin.

C. Education and Languages

1. Education. Most members of the 1975 cohort who were 15 years and older reported some secondary or higher

education. The data are shown in Table 2. This may be somewhat surprising for an immigrant population from a Third World country. Nonetheless, as the comparison in Table 2 shows, this relatively high educational achievement for the 1975 cohort is consistent with the findings of at least one other study.

2. Languages. More than half of the adult refugees reported that they had at least some English-speaking ability, while one-third made similar claims about French (see Table 3). Young men aged 15 to 35 were about twice as likely to rate their English or French language skills "good" as were their female counterparts. Men over the age of 35 were four or more times as likely to claim English or French language ability as women in the same age group. The group claiming the best command of English were men aged 26 to 35. Thirty-nine percent of this group rated themselves as "good" or "native."

It would seem from these data that the 1975 cohort, at least in terms of education and language, was well prepared for the challenge of an English-speaking, universally-literate society. As with all self-reporting data sets, however, we should take such assessments with a grain of salt. As regards language in particular, the managers of the camp operations suspected at the time of the survey that these self-assessments were generous ones.

TABLE 2

Pre-Arrival Educational Experience of 1975 Refugees 16 and Over and Dunning's Refugee Study Group
(as percents)

EDUCATION LEVEL	EVACUEE FILE	DUNNING'S STUDY GROUP
None or Elementary (Evacuee) 8 Years or Less (Dunning)	26.2%	32.0%
Secondary (Evacuee) 9-12 Years (Dunning)	51.3	42.0
University (Evacuee) 13-16 Years (Dunning)	19.1	20.0
Post Graduate (Evacuee) 17 or More Years (Dunning)	3.4	6.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0
N	75,100	550

Sources: Evacuee Master File and Bruce B. Dunning, Survey of the Social, Psychological, and Economic Adaptation of Vietnamese Refugees in the U.S., 1975-1979 (Washington: Bureau of Social Science Research, Inc. 1982), p. 69. Dunning's study covered persons 18-89 years of age.

NOTE: (1) The definitions used by the two studies are not completely comparable, particularly for the elementary and secondary level of education.

(2) 49,394 missing cases were eliminated for the 1975 refugees, most of whom were less than 16 years of age.

TABLE 3

Self-Reported Spoken Language Abilities of the 1975 Refugees 16 and Over
(as percents)

SPOKEN LANGUAGE ABILITY	ENGLISH	FRENCH	VIETNAMESE	KHMER
Good or Native	22.4%	12.7%	71.6%	4.1%
Some	31.2	20.2	0.6*	0.1*
None or Not Indicated	46.4	67.0	27.8	95.8
TOTAL	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0
N	65,825	65,825	65,825	65,825

Source: Evacuee Master File.

*These are presumably Vietnamese who knew some Khmer, and vice versa.

D. Vocational Background

1. Military Experience. A substantial proportion of the adult refugees had served in the armed forces of Vietnam. As shown in Table 4, close to half of the males in the 1975 cohort were serving in the armed forces at the time of their flight. The demographic group with the highest percentage of persons with military experience, as one might expect, was among men aged 21 through 35. Of that group, close to three of four were serving in the armed forces.

Data on the occupation group of enlisted men aged 20 to 35 indicate that these men were more highly skilled than one would expect from a group of regular ground troops. For example, 23.2 percent of the enlisted men reported occupations in the machine tool category, which would include machinists and mechanical repairers. Another 17.3 percent had been engaged in structural work, probably skilled construction trades, and 12.3 percent were classified as professional, technical, or managerial.

Our first reaction to the data on the military experience of the 1975 cohort was that the number of refugees who had been serving in the armed forces was very high, as was the proportion of officers within that population.

TABLE 4

Military and Civil Service Background in Indochina of the 1975 Refugees 16 and Over, by Sex
(as percents)

STATUS IN INDOCHINA	1975 REFUGEES	
	Males	Females
Military, Officer	23.8%	1.5%
Military, Enlisted	24.7	0.6
Civil Service	10.3	8.9
Other	41.3	89.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0
N	3,957	2,710

Source: Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File.

Note: 3,034 missing cases were eliminated.

After adjusting the data to exclude the 15 to 17 year olds from the refugee population and securing comparable U.S. data, we constructed Table 5. It shows that the extent of military experience is roughly comparable in the U.S. and the refugee populations. The proportion of officers, however, among the refugees is much higher than in the U.S. military. In the mid-1970s about 15 percent of the personnel in the U.S. Army were officers.[22]

2. Employment by the U.S. Government. Many refugees had worked directly or indirectly for the U.S. government in Indochina. That was no doubt part of the reason they were among those who got out safely. In fact, one of the stated goals of the rescue mission launched during the last days of Saigon was to bring out persons who had once worked for the U.S. It was believed that these people especially would be in danger following the Communist takeover. In all, about 38 percent of adult refugees had worked in some U.S.-related job prior to leaving Indochina. This exposure to American culture and work organization was no doubt helpful to these refugees after their arrival in the States.

3. Occupation im Indochina. Among the many data collection activities that were undertaken in the relocation camps was a labor skills inventory.

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[22] Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1978, Table 605.

TABLE 5

Military Experience of U.S. Males 18 and Over, 1977 and of the 1975 Refugee Males 18 and Over, 1975
(as percents)

Military Experience	U.S. Males 18 and Over	1975 Refugee Males 18 and Over
Veterans	40.9%	40.1%
Active Duty	2.0	0.0
TOTAL	42.9%	40.1%
N	72,460,000	3,647

Sources: Data on U.S. males from Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1978, Tables 29, 602, and 624. Data on 1975 refugee males from Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File.

Note: 2,724 missing cases were eliminated.

Occupations were recorded for all interviewed refugees and then classified into standard U.S. Department of Labor classification schemes. In the case of refugees who were members of the armed forces, their job descriptions were fit to a civilian counterpart. Thus, for example, a refugee who worked repairing aircraft was classified as working in mechanical repairing occupations. The distribution in Table 6 shows these occupational data grouped into four broad occupational categories: white collar, blue collar, service, and farmwork. The data there present an almost uncanny mirror image of the distribution of the U.S. male work force in the mid-seventies.

The same was not true for women. Female refugees who had work experience in Indochina prior to coming to the U.S. were considerably less likely than American women to have worked in white collar occupations.

The broad similarity between the occupational profile of male refugees and that of the male U.S. population did not mean that their adjustment to the U.S. labor market would be easy. In addition to the obvious cultural barriers, many of the arriving refugees found that their skills did not transfer directly to the U.S. labor market. A Vietnamese admiral, for example, could not secure a comparable job in the U.S. Navy, and an attorney could not try a case in a U.S. court without first meeting licensure requirements.

TABLE 6

Distribution of Occupational Category in Indochina of 1975 Refugees 16 and Over and of U.S. Employed Persons 16 and Over, 1975, by Sex
(as percents)

CATEGORY	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	U.S.	REFUGEE	U.S.	REFUGEE	U.S.	REFUGEE
White Collar Worker	41.3%	43.2	62.9%	45.2	49.8%	41.7
Blue Collar Worker	45.3	43.2	14.1	19.3	33.0	35.7
Service Worker	8.6	7.0	21.6	29.3	13.7	16.2
Farmworker*	4.8	6.6	1.3	6.2	3.5	6.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	51,230,000	3,503	33,553,000	2,447	84,783,000	5,950

Sources: Data on U.S. employed persons 16 and over in 1975 from Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1976, Table 600. Data on 1975 refugees from sample of Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File.

Note: 3,751 missing cases were eliminated for the 1975 refugees.

*Also includes persons engaged in fishing.

Further, those refugees with rural backgrounds found their agricultural skills of little use as virtually all refugees (rural or urban) were resettled in urban or suburban areas in the U.S.

Tables 7 and 8 give more detailed breakdown of the occupations of the 1975 refugees. The narrower categories used there are those recognized by the Dictionary of Occupational Titles.[23] The distribution shows clearly the white collar bias in the occupational distribution of the 1975 cohort.

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[23] Dictionary of Occupational Titles, Third Edition (Washington: USGPO, 1965).

TABLE 7

Distribution of Pre-Arrival Occupational Group of 1975 Refugees 16 and Over, by Sex
(as percents)

OCCUPATIONAL GROUP	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
Professional, Technical, and Managerial	31.6%	15.9%	25.1%
Clerical and Sales	11.6	23.7	16.6
Service	7.0	29.3	16.2
Farming and Fishing	6.6	6.2	6.4
Processing	0.5	0.6	0.6
Machine Tools	14.5	0.7	8.8
Bench Work	4.8	17.0	9.8
Structural Work	11.0	0.2	6.6
Miscellaneous	12.3	6.5	9.9
TOTAL	100.1	100.1	100.0
N	3,503	2,447	5,950

Source: Sample of Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File.

Note: (1) These are Dictionary of Occupational Title (DOT) classifications. This is the system used by the U.S. Employment Service, which designed this portion of the evacuee file.

(2) 3,751 missing cases were eliminated for the 1975 refugees.

TABLE 8

Occupational Distribution of the 1975 Refugees 16 and Over by Two-Digit DOT Classification With 500 or More Refugees in Each

(Pre-Arrival Occupation)

OCCUPATION	NUMBER OF REFUGEES
Mechanical Repairing	3,791
Domestic Servants	3,597
Textiles, Leather	3,435
Stenographers, Clerks	2,927
Motor Freight Drivers	2,749
Salesmen and Merchandisers	2,198
Education	1,782
Administrative Specializations	1,743
Farmers	1,657
Museums, Libraries	1,629
Bookkeepers, Cashiers	1,479
Miscellaneous Managers	1,354
Fishermen	1,246
Medicine/Health	1,225
Personal Service Workers	1,124
Food and Beverage Service	1,101
Electrical Assembly	1,074
Miscellaneous Construction	931
Packaging and Handling	760
Production Clerks	754
Painting, Plastering	633
Transportation, NEC	671
TOTAL	37,860

Source: Evacuee Master File.

Note: An additional 8,721 refugees were in occupations with less than 500 other refugees, and data were missing on 27,405 cases. DOT stands for the Dictionary of Occupational Titles.

E. The Camp Experience

1. The Mainland Camps. Refugees leaving Vietnam had to be housed immediately. Although a few were placed briefly in camps in Thailand, and still others in the Philippines, most were brought to the U.S. as quickly as possible. Temporary holding centers were set up at Guam, Wake Island, and Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. These centers provided food, clothing, shelter, and emergency medical care. The U.S. military reacted swiftly to the influx, providing the logistical support needed for the holding centers.[24]

The military also played host in the four Mainland reception centers, but the overall resettlement operation was managed by an ad hoc, multi-agency entity, the Inter-Agency Task Force for Indochinese Refugees (IATF). IATF was headed for a few weeks by Ambassador Dean Brown and then, after May 27, 1975, by Julia Vadala Taft.

Virtually all of the arriving refugees were cycled through the four camps, with only a handful of the well-to-do bypassing them. It was in these camps that the refugees were formally processed by INS, arrangements were made with the voluntary agencies for their resettlement throughout the United States, and information was collected for the

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[24]For a summary of this, as well as references to primary sources, see, Taft, North, and Ford, Refugee Resettlement in the U.S.: Time for a New Focus, 105-106.

Evacuee Master File. The camps were deliberately located in four different parts of the country: Camp Pendleton, between Los Angeles and San Diego; Fort Chaffee in Arkansas; Eglin Air Force Base in the panhandle of Florida; and Fort Indiantown Gap, in central Pennsylvania. Thus, refugees were sent in four different groups to the West (33 percent), to the Mississippi Valley (40 percent), to the Southeast (7 percent), and to the Northeast (20 percent).

2. Duration of Stay. Some refugees stayed in the camps for only a few days, while others were kept for months. All were gone by December 20, 1975 when Fort Chaffee discharged the last of its refugees. A rough division can be made among the refugees between those who departed within a month (about one third) and those who stayed longer than a month (about two thirds). In general, the more advantaged among the refugees left more quickly. For example, refugees with good language skills and a strong educational background had shorter stays than those whose skills were more tenuous.

Further, as Table 9 shows, persons who reported professional occupations had shorter stays in the camps than other workers. Persons who had friends or relatives in the U.S. spent less time in the camps than those who did not. And, for reasons that are not clear, Buddhists were more likely to leave the camps earlier than Catholics and Protestants.

TABLE 9

Length of Time Spent in U.S. Refugee Camps of 1975 Refugees for Whom Camp Departure Date is Known, by Selected Characteristics

(as percents)

CHARACTERISTIC	PERCENT WHO SPENT MORE THAN ONE MONTH IN CAMPS*
TOTAL - ALL REFUGEES	64.6%
OCCUPATION GROUP	(N = 44,260)
Professional, Technical, Managerial	56.6
Clerical, Sales	64.1
Service	63.8
Farming, Fishing	87.0
Processing	86.9
Machine Tools	73.7
Bench Work	77.3
Structural Work	81.9
Miscellaneous	83.6
FRIENDS AND RELATIVES IN U.S.	(N = 69,326)
Had Relatives in U.S.	46.5
Had Friends in U.S.	41.9
Did Not Have Relatives in U.S.	67.3
Did Not Have Friends in U.S.	67.8
RELIGION	(N = 82,305)
Buddhist	57.6
Catholic	71.1
Protestant	65.0
Other	55.3
None	78.6

Source: Evacuee Master File

Note: Missing cases were eliminated as follows: Occupation Group 40,314, Friends and Relatives in U.S. 15,248, Religion 2,269.

*As explained in the text, refugees with short stays in Stateside camps generally had more favorable resettlement experiences than those who stayed longer in the camps.

There is also some evidence of a geographic bias in the resettlement of refugees who were kept in the camps for a month or more. These later-settled states may have acquired a more disadvantaged refugee population than that of other states. Over 75 percent of the refugees resettled in Maine, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, Alabama, Arkansas, Tennessee, Colorado, and Idaho had been kept in camp a month or longer. By contrast, only about half of the refugees sent to California, Hawaii, and Iowa stayed in camp for more than a month. Data like these suggest that in some states, i.e., those receiving a more disadvantaged refugee population, the odds against successful resettlement were higher than in others.

3. Volag Assignment. The resettlement policy adopted by the Inter-Agency Task Force required that all camp-processed refugees[25] be resettled by one of the immigrant-assisting voluntary agencies. In all, over 20 organizations of varying sizes took part, although the greatest numbers of refugees were resettled by six major organizations. Many of these volags are church-related organizations. They include the U.S. Catholic Conference (USCC) and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). Some private lay organizations also were involved: the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Tolstoy Foundation (TF), the American Council for Nationalities Service (ACNS), and the American Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees (AFCR). Finally, some of the states also served as resettlement agencies. The states of Washington and Iowa particularly stand out, the latter taking responsibility for the resettlement of a single subpopulation, the Black Thai. Most of these organizations had been operating for generations, and most had played comparable roles on behalf of the displaced persons of

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[25]Exceptions were made for those with $4,000 or more who requested that the role of the volag be waived.

World War II, the Hungarians,and the Cubans.[26]

The volags quickly opened offices in the four camps, and began the process of matching refugees with resettlement opportunities. In general, this consisted of reviewing the refugee's occupational background against a Department of Labor listing of labor markets needing (or not needing) additional workers, comparing the refugee's preferences for place of resettlement against the agency's opportunities, and assigning the refugee to a sponsor in the chosen locality. Because many of the volags were religious organizations, the local sponsors were often churches. In some cases individual and corporate sponsors were used, although this approach was not as successful as using local churches. The final distribution of refugees by volag is shown below.

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[26]For more on the role of the voluntary agencies in refugee resettlement, see Norman L. Zucker, "The Voluntary Agencies and Refugee Resettlement in the United States," in U.S. Immigration Policy and the National Interest, Appendix C to the Staff Report of the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy (Washington: USGPO, 1981), pp. 509-596, and David S. North, Lawrence S. Lewin, and Jennifer R. Wagner, Kaleidoscope: The Resettlement of Refugees in the U.S. by the Voluntary Agencies (Washington: New Transcentury Foundation, 1982).

Distribution of 1975 Refugees by Volag

U.S. Catholic Conference	37.1%
International Rescue Committee	15.4
Church World Service	13.4
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service	12.8
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society	3.0
Tolstoy Foundation	2.9
American Council for Nationalities Service	.9
American Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees	.8
State of Iowa	.4
Other	5.8
Not indicated	7.5

All volags offered their services to all comers. Still, there are indications that the distribution of refugees among the volags had some relationship to the religious preferences of the refugees. For example, about a third of the refugees identified themselves as Catholics, but almost 60 percent of those signing up with USCC were Catholics.

Thirty-five percent of the refugees identified themselves as Buddhists, but 67 percent of the tiny caseload (N=424) of the Buddhist volag were Buddhists. Similarly both CWS and LIRS had slightly higher percentages of Protestants than the laws of chance would suggest.

There are also indications that among the large volume volags, USCC picked up more than its share of disadvantaged persons. For example, while 15 percent of USCC's adult refugees had worked in professional positions in Indochina, 17 percent of the adults assigned to other volags had this background. At the other end of the spectrum, 6.5 percent of USCC's adult refugees were noted as farmers or fisherfolk, while the other volags had only 2.5 percent in that category. Among the smaller volags, Tolstoy (7 percent) and the Buddhist agency (22 percent) also had disproportionate numbers of farming and fishing refugees.

4. Sponsorship. The initial goal of all volags was to identify and subsequently verify a sponsor for each refugee (or refugee family). Data from the Evacuee Master File suggest that this was often a difficult task. At the final interview prior to being discharged from camp, only 52 percent[27] of outgoing refugees had verified sponsors. It appears from these data that the remainder were discharged

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[27]This relatively low figure, given the determination to link all refugees with sponsors, may have been more of a reporting problem than a programmatic one.

into uncertain conditions. As the data in Table 10 suggest, this problem was generally more serious for the smaller volags than for the large ones.

F. Conclusion

From what we have seen thus far there were reasons to be both hopeful and pessimistic about the future of the 1975 cohort in the U.S. On the one hand, the entire resettlement program was launched in a great rush and without a clear idea of what it was to accomplish and how. On the other hand, the backgrounds of a large portion of the refugee population were impressive in human capital terms, and they were probably better prepared for life in the U.S. than many other waves of immigrants that came before and after them.

TABLE 10

Verification of Sponsorship of 1975 Refugees 16 and Over, by Voluntary Agency, 1975

VOLUNTARY AGENCY	REFUGEES 16 AND OVER	PERCENT WITH SPONSORS VERIFIED AT FINAL INTERVIEW
USCC	27,442	53.6%
IRC	11,390	56.4
CWS	9,892	64.3
LIRS	9,483	63.2
HIAS	2,208	54.8
Tolstoy	2,173	39.4
ACNS*	653	94.8
AFCR	620	30.6
Iowa	319	49.8
Other	4,223	44.1
TOTAL	68,403	56.1%

Source: Evacuee Master File.

Note: 5,583 missing cases were eliminated.

*ACNS, now one of the larger voluntary agencies, first resettled refugees in 1975.

CHAPTER 3: INITIAL SETTLEMENT AND SUBSEQUENT MIGRATION

A. Policy Context

The geographical distribution of Indochinese refugees across the U.S. is a matter of concern to officials at all levels of government. As shall be shown in this chapter, the Indochinese have not settled in an evenly-distributed pattern. Concentrations have developed in areas such as southern California and parts of Texas. These concentrations have created problems for state and local officials charged with providing refugees the services they require to make their adjustment to American society.

The distribution of refugees across the nation is a result of two related factors: the initial placement of the refugee, and subsequent migration. Should it be so inclined, a democratic government could use a collection of strategies to influence the initial distribution and subsequent movements of a refugee population. As we will show, the U.S. government sought to guide the initial geographical distribution of refugees, but made only minimal efforts to influence their secondary migration.

The Refugee Task Force, in 1975, impressed with the concentration of Cuban refugees in the immediate area of their disembarkation in Florida, decided that incoming Indochinese refugees would be processed through four widely-

scattered stateside camps. The largest group of refugees was assigned to a state that has attracted very few immigrants from overseas in the last hundred years--Arkansas.[28] Similarly the Task Force encouraged the voluntary agencies to place refugees throughout the United States. Refugees, however, were free to move about the country and resettle wherever they chose. Being newly arrived and lacking many possessions or community roots in the U.S., a substantial proportion of the 1975 cohort (and subsequent groups) of refugees did exactly that--they engaged in what we are calling secondary migration.

While much of this migration was within states, our focus is on longer moves, i.e., those that took the refugees across state boundaries. We have data on initial state-of--resettlement (in 1975) and on the state of residence in 1978, 1979, and 1980. A refugee who lived in a different state in one of these years than in another is regarded as a secondary migrant. One who settled in state A in 1975, for example, moved to state B, and returned to state A by 1978, is not regarded as a secondary migrant simply because our data cannot measure such movements. Our definition

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[28]Immigrant enthusiasm for Arkansas is reflected in these two numbers; in 1970 4.7 percent of the U.S. population was foreign-born; 0.4 percent of Arkansas' population was foreign-born. Source: US Bureau of Census, 1970 Census of Population, Vol.1, United States Summary, (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1973), Table 143.

of a different state of residence at the times when the counts were made thus understates the extent of mobility because it records neither intra-state moves nor return migration within the same year.

Secondary migration has both positive and negative implications. On the plus side, it shows that refugees feel independent enough to move to wherever they want to live. On the negative side, it frustrates the volags and sponsors in the original settlement location and separates the migrant from the services that would have been provided in that locale. Further, community agencies in places where secondary migrants ultimately settled often found themselves with more refugees than they anticipated, thus straining their resources. Southern California communities, for example, were very hard-pressed by the influx of refugees, many of whom were secondary migrants.

While the federal government had consciously sought to distribute refugees around the nation in 1975, it put forth little effort to discourage secondary migration. By the late 1970s the volags had been encouraged by the State Department not to spend funds to send refugees from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles, for example. But individual refugees retained their rights to carry their refugee-specific assistance program eligibility with them as they moved from state to state, and in some cases they clearly moved

from states with lesser benefit packages to those with greater ones. RCA benefit levels, as noted earlier, vary substantially from state to state. Although it is clear that many Indochinese refugees relocated to California, it is not clear to what extent these moves were motivated by the more generous welfare program in that state.[29]

B. The Distribution of the the Population Over Time

1. Initial Distribution. Members of the 1975 group of refugees were asked during the camp interview about their preferences for a state of resettlement. A summary of the states refugees chose and where they were actually sent is shown in Table 11. Almost half of them wanted to go to California, but only a fifth were sent there. Less than a quarter wanted to go to the 43 least-favored states, yet more than one half were sent to those places. In all, 47.3 percent of the refugees were sent to the state of their choice. (For a more detailed, 50-state distribution of the 1975 refugees, look ahead to Table 14.)

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[29]For more on the Indochinese refugees use of income transfer programs, see Table 27 and David S. North, "Refugee Earnings and Utilization of Financial Assistance Programs, " a paper prepared for the Refugee Policy Forum at Wingspread, Racine, WI, February 6-8, 1984. New TransCentury Foundation, Washington, DC.

TABLE 11

1975 State of Preference, 1975 State of Destination, and 1980 State of Residence of 1975 Refugees, by Selected States
(as percents)

STATE	1975 PREFERENCE	1975 DESTINATION	1980 RESIDENCE
California	45.5%	20.2%	37.2%
Pennsylvania	7.7	6.3	4.0
Louisiana	6.6	3.4	5.0
Florida	6.2	4.4	2.6
Texas	5.5	7.8	12.0
Washington	2.7	3.4	3.6
Virginia	2.5	3.4	3.5
TOTAL - SEVEN STATES	76.6	48.9	67.9
BALANCE OF STATES	23.4	51.1	32.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	57,330	116,267	85,267

Source: Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File.

Note: Missing cases were eliminated as follows: 1975 preference 65,468, 1975 destination 7,859, 1980 residence 39,227.

Not only were the 1975 refugees scattered widely throughout the 50 states, they were sprinkled in fairly small groupings within those states. This is obvious when the 1975 geographical distribution of refugees is analyzed by three-digit zip code areas.

Zip code areas, though designed to facilitate the delivery of mail, are also useful for demographic analysis. In this study we have used the first three digits of zip code areas for our analysis. There are approximately 896 such three-digit residential areas in use by the U.S Post Office.[30] On average, each has approximately 250,000 residents, with the total population of these areas being much higher in urban than in rural areas. For example, the 19 three-digit zip code areas in Kansaas have an average 1980 population of around 24,000 each. One three-digit zip code in Chicago includes 3 million people.

In order to identify three-digit zip code areas with large, medium, and small concentrations of Indochinese refugees, we went to the 1979 Alien Address reports. Areas with more than 3,000 Indochinese registrants that year were regarded as large concentrations, those with 501 to

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[30]The balance of the 999 three-digit zip code areas have either not been used by the Post Office, or they have been assigned to non-residential mail recipients, such as large government agencies.

2,999 as medium concentrations and those with 500 or fewer as small concentrations. It should be noted that while 3,000 is a large concentration by Indochinese standards, 3,000 people in a population of 250,000 represents a little over 1 percent of the total.

In 1975 the 113,222 refugees with known zip codes were spread among 813 three-digit zip code areas. In addition, another 62 three digit-zip code areas were noted as the homes of one to five refugees. (We have disregarded these data on the grounds that these notations are more likely to be coding errors than placements of such tiny numbers of refugees.) This suggests a very wide distribution throughout the U.S., and the frequent placement of refugees in three-digit zip code areas with small numbers of other refugees.

2. Secondary Migration. Four important findings emerged from our analysis of secondary migration among the 1975 cohort:

- There was a great deal of it, much more than for Americans generally.
- The direction of it, to the South and to the West, followed the current American pattern.
- It lessened with the passage of time.
- It showed an ingathering of the refugees, as more of them moved into areas of higher concentration.

Between 1975 and 1980, 9.1 percent of the U.S. population

(aged five or more in 1980) moved across state lines. An additional 1.9 percent arrived from overseas[31]. By contrast, fully 45 percent of Indochinese refugees for whom we know residence lived in a different state in 1980 than in 1975.[32] While there was a great deal of secondary migration, we should not overlook the fact that a little more than half of the refugees stayed in the states to which they had been sent. This suggests that the government's dispersal policy, for better or worse, worked with a majority of the 1975 refugees.

The overall direction of this secondary movement has been to the South and West. We divided the nation with the Mississippi River, assigning all of Louisiana[33] to the East and all of Minnesota to the West. We added California, Arizona, New Mexico and Oklahoma to the Old Confederacy to constitute the South, and defined the rest of the nation (including the District of Columbia) as the North. A third category, Offshore, includes Alaska, Hawaii and the island territories.

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[31]U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 368, Geographical Mobility: March 1975 to March 1980. Washington: USGPO, 1981).

[32]The refugee population was, by happenstance, aged five or older in 1980 because children born in the U.S. were U.S. citizens and therefore not required to file INS Alien Registration cards.

[33]The concentration of Indochinese is in New Orleans, which is on the East bank of the Mississippi.

Table 12 shows the migration among the 1975 refugees towards the South and the West between 1975 and 1980 as do Exhibits 1 and 2.

A comparison of Table 12, showing the distribution of the 1975 cohort in 1975 and 1980, and Table 13, showing the geographical distribution of all Indochinese refugees (in 1975, 1978 and 1982) suggests that the 1975 cohort has been much more concentrated in the West, and the South than the Indochinese generally.

A more detailed, 50-state distribution of the 1975 cohort in 1975 and 1980 is shown in Table 14. Eight states, all in the South or West had larger percentages of the 1975 cohort in 1980 than in 1975. In seven states the percentage remained the same, and in 36 jurisdictions it declined. Among those with declining populations were seven of the eight states mentioned in Chapter 2 that had drawn disproportionately large shares of refugees with long stays in the camps. The only exception was Colorado. Predictably, as the refugees' roots became more thoroughly established, the speed with which they moved declined. Although we do not have data for January 1976 and January 1977, what we do have (in Table 15) shows that in 1980 the proportion of adult refugees moving across state lines had dropped from more than one in three in 1975 to less than one in

TABLE 12

Geographic Distribution of 1975 Refugees, by U.S. Regions, 1975 and 1980
(as percents)

U.S. REGION	1975 DISTRIBUTION	1980 DISTRIBUTION
West	54.8%	68.4%
East	45.2	31.1
Offshore	0.7	0.5
South	52.5	67.2
North	47.5	32.3
Offshore	0.7	0.5
N	116,267	85,267

Source: Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File

Note: Missing cases were eliminated as follows: 1975 distribution 7,859, 1980 distribution 39,227.

See text for definitions of regions.

EXHIBIT 1

DISTRIBUTION OF 1975 INDOCHINESE REFUGEES BY DESTINATION STATE IN 1975

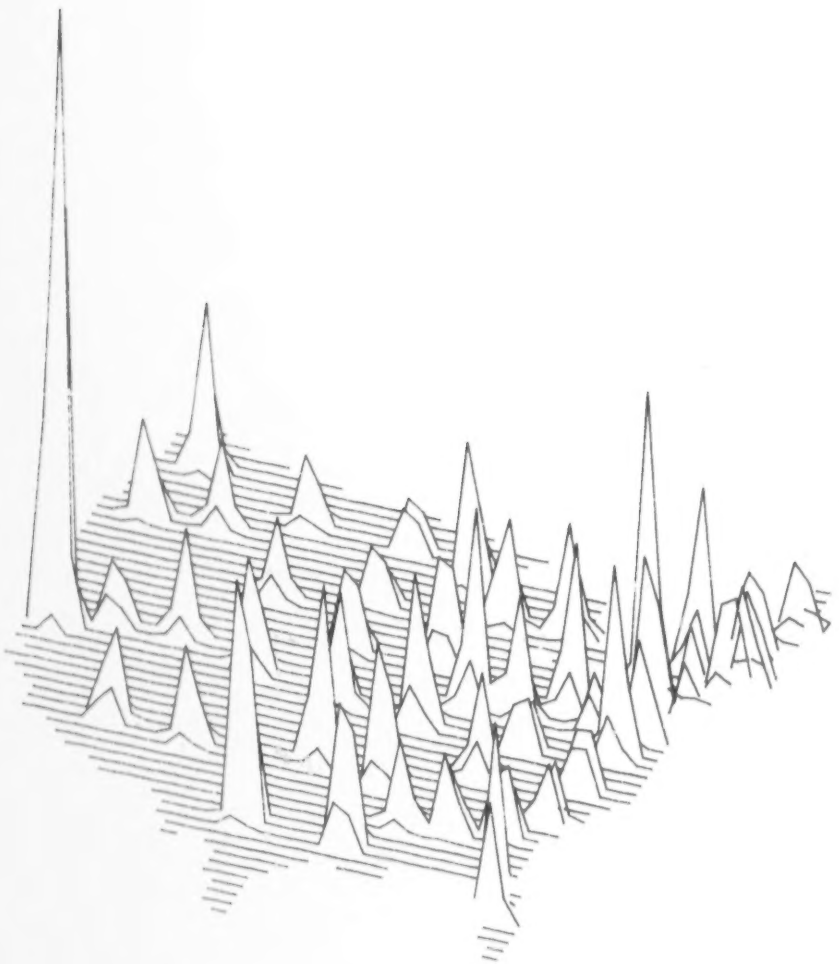

EXHIBIT 2

DISTRIBUTION OF 1975 INDOCHINESE REFUGEES BY STATE OF RESIDENCE IN 1980

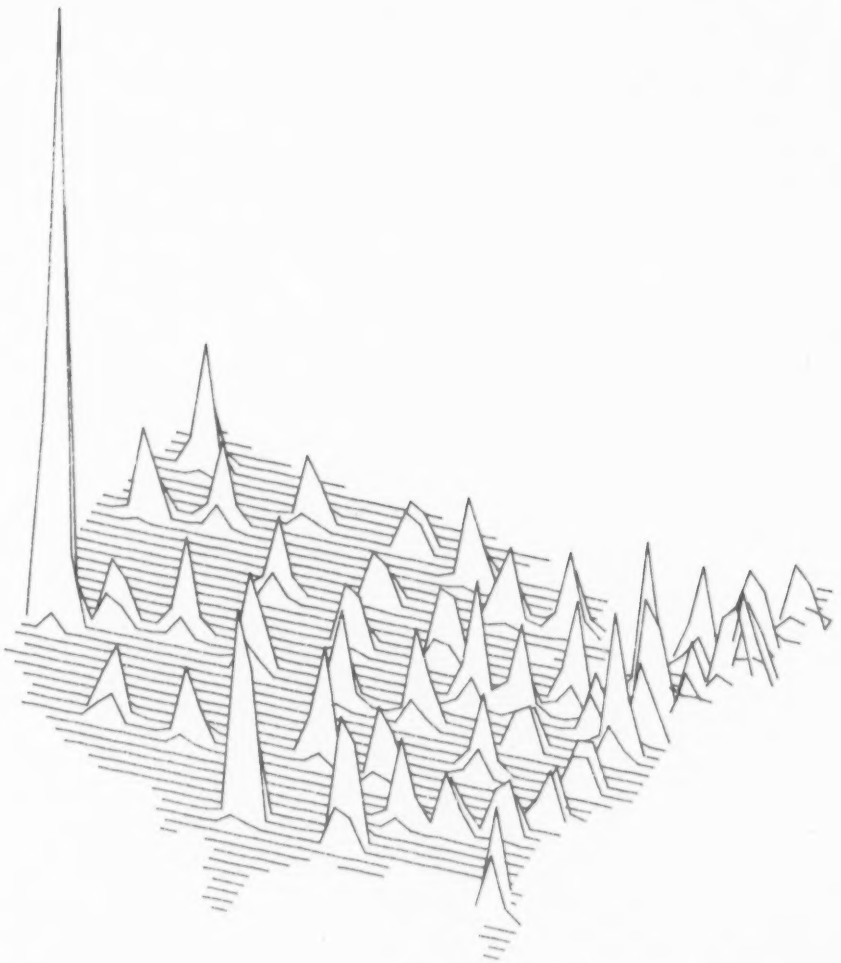

TABLE 13

Distribution of All Cohorts of Indochinese Refugees, by U.S. Regions, 1975, 1978, and 1982 (as percents)

U.S. REGION	1975 DISTRIBUTION	1978 DISTRIBUTION	1982 DISTRIBUTION
West	55.1%	59.2%	66.5%
East	42.5	38.8	32.5
Offshore	2.4	1.9	1.0
South	51.7	57.5	58.0
North	46.0	40.6	41.0
Offshore	2.4	1.9	1.0
N	121,610	138,658	619,834

Sources: Data for 1975 from Interagency Task Force on Indochina Refugees, Report to the Congress (Washington, D.C., December 15, 1975), page 15 (data reflect the Task Force's records on refugees resettled by state). Data for 1978 from U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Report to the Congress, Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program (Washington, D.C., December 31, 1979), Table 4. Data for 1982 from Office of Refugee Resettlement, "Monthly Data Reports for September 1982" (Washington: ORR, mimeo).

Note: The 1975 distributions shown here and in Table 12 differ slightly because they are drawn from different data sources.

TABLE 14

Distribution of 1975 Refugees, by Destination State in 1975 and State of Residence in 1980
(as percents)

STATE	1975 DESTINATION	1980 RESIDENCE	STATE	1975 DESTINATION	1980 RESIDENCE
Alaska	0.1%	0.1%	Missouri	2.4%	1.3%
Alabama	1.2	0.6	Montana	0.1	0.1
Arizona	1.1	0.6	Nebraska	1.1	0.6
Arkansas	2.8	0.9	Nevada	0.3	0.3
California	20.2	37.2*	New Hampshire	0.1	0.1
Colorado	1.6	1.8*	New Jersey	1.3	0.9
Connecticut	1.0	0.6	New Mexico	0.9	0.3
Delaware	0.1	0.1	New York	3.4	1.6
			North Carolina	1.1	0.6
District of Columbia	0.8	0.1	North Dakota	0.3	0.1
Florida	4.5	2.6	Ohio	2.4	1.3
Georgia	1.1	0.6	Oklahoma	3.1	2.2
Hawaii	0.6	0.4	Oregon	1.6	2.0*
Idaho	0.2	0.1	Pennsylvania	6.3	4.0
Illinois	3.2	2.2	Rhode Island	0.2	0.1
Indiana	1.5	0.9	South Carolina	0.6	0.4
Iowa	2.1	1.3	South Dakota	0.4	0.1
Kansas	1.5	1.5	Tennessee	0.9	0.3
Kentucky	0.8	0.4	Texas	7.9	12.0*
Louisiana	3.4	5.0*	Utah	0.5	0.4
Maine	0.3	0.1	Vermont	0.1	0.0
Maryland	1.9	1.5	Virginia	3.4	3.5*
Massachusetts	0.9	0.7	Washington	3.4	3.6*
Michigan	1.9	1.5	West Virginia	1.6	0.9
Minnesota	3.2	1.9	Wisconsin	1.6	0.9
Mississippi	0.3	0.4*	Wyoming	0.1	0.1
			TOTAL	100.0	100.0
			N	116,267	85,267

Source: Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File.

Note: Missing cases were eliminated as follows: 1975 distribution 7,859, 1980 distribution 39,227.

*States with a higher percentage in 1980 than in 1975.

TABLE 15

Interstate Migration of the 1975 Refugees 16 and Over

PERIOD	PERCENT WHO MOVED	RATE PER YEAR	N
1975-1978	36.4%	14.6%*	7,974
1978-1979	13.4	13.4	5,962
1979-1980	9.7	9.7	5,576

Source: Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File.

Note: Missing cases were eliminated as follows: 1975-1978 1,727, 1978-1979 3,739, 1979-1980 4,125.

*36.4% was divided by two and one half, because most of the 1975 refugees arrived in the summer of that year.

ten. Finally, the Evacuee File plus the three years of alien address cards show a regathering of the 1975 cohort into larger clusters. (See Table 16.) In 1975, 8.5 percent of the 1975 cohort settled into three-digit zip code areas of high concentrations. By 1978, that percentage had risen to 13.5; by 1979 it was at 17.5 and by 1980 fully 20 percent of the 1975 cohort was living in a high-concentration zip area. While only one of three 1975 refugees was in a medium or large concentration in 1975, three of five were in such clusters five years later. Unfortunately, in passing the INS Efficiency Act in 1981 the Congress killed the Alien Registration program, so we will never know how long these trends continued.

TABLE 16

Geographic Concentration of the 1975 Refugees 16 and Over, by Three-Digit Zip Code Areas, 1975, 1978, 1979, & 1980

SIZE OF CONCENTRATION (IN 1979)	PERCENT OF COHORT			
	1975	1978	1979	1980
Large (3,000 or more)	8.5%	13.5%	17.5%	20.0%
Medium (500 - 2,999)	26.8	37.2	38.7	39.9
Small (500 or fewer)	64.7	49.2	43.8	40.1
TOTAL	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0
N	25,288	25,926	25,856	25,870

Source: Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File.

Note: There were 638 missing cases eliminated for 1975, and there were fewer than 50 missing cases for each of the subsequent years.

C. Who Moved and Who Stayed?

1. Previous Studies. Before presenting our analysis, it may be useful to review four other studies of secondary migration: those of Bruce Dunning, Kathleen McInnis, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (the human resources agency), and the surveys of Opportunity Systems, Inc. (OSI). Although each of these studies focused on different populations and used different measures, they all provide some useful insights.

Dunning examined "major moves" from one metropolitan area to another, or across state lines. He counted the number of moves during the refugees' stay in the States, and found that almost half stayed within the area of arrival (roughly similar to our finding). He found that women were slightly less likely to move than men, and that those outside the labor force and those over 50 were less likely to move than others. The motives for movement included employment opportunities, better climate, and presence of family or friends. The availability of income support at the destination was offered to respondents as a multiple-choice option, but was selected by fewer than 1 percent of his respondents.[34]

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[34]Dunning, Adaptation of Vietnamese Refugees in the U.S., pp. 225-28.

McInnis chose an interesting, but we think, atypical study group: 482 families resettled in the years 1975 through 1980 in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan by the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). She found that only 18 percent had moved out in the five-year period of study (though some had not been there throughout the period). She compared this to Census data showing that 47 percent of the U.S. population moved (at least to another dwelling) in the same five-year period. One could argue that this population is atypical because LIRS refugees were less susceptible to secondary migration than others, a subject to which we will return. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that McInnis found age and education did not seem to explain secondary migration while settlement in a small community (one with less than 11,000 inhabitants) and having few skills correlated with out-migration.[35]

The Los Angeles County study group consisted of its RCA caseload, not all secondary migrants to that County. It reported that a high percentage of RCA recipients (48 percent) had settled somewhere else before coming to Los Angeles. It further showed that those secondary migrants who were on welfare usually had been in the U.S. for a longer period than those recipients who settled initially

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[35]Kathleen McInnis, "Secondary Migration Among the Indochinese," Journal of Refugee Resettlement, Vol. 1, No. 3 (May 1981).

in the county. Finally, the LA study showed that almost half of the migrants receiving RCA in Los Angeles County had received income transfer payments in another jurisdiction before moving to LA. In short, those migrants who were on the Los Angeles welfare rolls seemed to have been those who were originally settled somewhere else and were having difficulties adjusting to Amercian society.[36]

The X Wave OSI survey, a nationwide telephone survey of all cohorts of Indochinese refugees, was conducted in the fall of 1981. It provides a different perspective than that of the Los Angeles study.[37] Generally OSI found that about 33 percent of the respondents had moved across state lines since their arrival in the US. It also reported that non-migrants were more likely to receive Food Stamps than migrants and that this pattern held with cash assistance as well. Similarly, as shown in Table 17, migrants to Texas and California were more likely to be labor force participants (and employed) than were non-migrants. Equally interesting is the fact that the labor force participation rates for migrants were remarkably higher in Texas (78.9 percent) than in California (47.4 percent). Perhaps the

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[36]Los Angeles County, Department of Public Social Services, Report on a Survey of Indochinese Refugee Assistance Payments Case Characteristics (Los Angeles: June 1980)

[37]The OSI survey, like our study, defined secondary migrants as those whose state of current residence is different from that of initial s.ttlement.

TABLE 17

Employment Characteristics of Indochinese Refugees in OSI Wave X Survey in California and Texas, by Migration History*
(as weighted percents)

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS	CALIFORNIA		TEXAS	
	Migrant	Non-Migrant	Migrant	Non-Migrant
Labor Force Participation Rate	47.4%	43.8%	78.9%	67.9%
Employed	42.5	37.7	77.4	62.6
Unemployed	10.3	14.0	2.0	7.8

Source: Adapted from Opportunity Systems, Inc., Tenth Wave Survey of Southeast Asian Refugees (ORR: 1983), Tables 5-6.

Note: Data are for individuals 16 years of age or over who entered before 1981.

*Migration is defined as a change of residence between the state of entry and the state of current residence -- in this case, either California or Texas.

less generous income transfer programs of Texas[38] encourage employment.

2. Movers and Stayers in the 1975 Cohort. We conducted a two-stage analysis aimed at describing the dynamics of secondary migration among refugees in the 1975 cohort. First, we performed a simple crosstabulation analysis to identify characteristics of refugees and/or their experience that seemed to make them more or less likely to move.(See Table 18.) Three broad categories of data were considered:

- Background data such as education or occupation in Indochina
- Data related to the resettlement experience such as the Volag to which the refugee was assigned, whether there was a sponsor, and the state of first settlement
- Demographic data, principally age and sex

In the second analysis stage, we used what we learned from the crosstabulations to conduct a regression analysis. Both stages of this analysis were performed for each of the three time periods for which we had data, i.e. 1975-1978, 1978-1979, and 1979-1980.

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[38]In addition to having much lower benefit levels for RCA and AFDC, Texas' unemployment insurance benefits are considerably below those of California. Further, Texas, unlike California, has no general assistance program.

TABLE 18

Incidence of Interstate Migration of 1975 Refugees 16 and Over by Selected Variables (1975-1980)
(as percents)

VARIABLE	PERCENT WHO MOVED		
	1975-78	1978-79	1979-80
OCCUPATION IN INDOCHINA			
Professional	36.3%	11.7%	9.5%
Clerical	33.5	14.7	7.4
Manufacturing	35.2	16.8	10.1
Construction	38.6	11.2	10.0
Service	33.4	12.3	9.0
Other	41.0	14.7	12.6
(N)	(4,295)	(3,642)	(2,819)
MILITARY PARTICIPATION			
Officer	34.5	13.2	8.9
Enlisted Man	38.5	14.7	12.8
Civil Servant	36.8	11.7	9.7
(N)	(2,152)	(1,644)	(1,565)
TIME IN CAMP			
Less than 30 days	31.2	9.0	6.8
More than 30 days	39.2	14.4	10.6
(N)	(5,959)	4,482)	(4,163)
MIGRATION			
Fled with family	35.3	13.2	9.2
Fled alone	43.5	15.2	12.7
(N)	(5,634)	(4,207)	(3,945)
Sponsorship			
Yes	33.6	12.0	9.1
No	40.6	16.3	11.9
(N)	(6,545)	(4,861)	(4,550)
SETTLED IN DESIRED STATE			
Yes	33.8	12.6	9.0
No	43.1	15.6	11.5
(N)	(4,259)	(3,135)	(2,930)
VOLUNTARY AGENCY			
USCC	36.9	13.0	9.9
LIRS	35.3	15.8	10.4
IRC	35.6	12.4	8.3
CWS	32.6	13.6	8.9
HIAS	35.8	13.9	8.9
Tolstoy	36.2	13.2	9.6
AFCR	40.7	12.1	18.2
ACNS	45.9	7.5	12.2
Other	35.5	9.8	10.2
(N)	(7,608)	(5,685)	(5,297)

Table continued on next page.

TABLE 18

Continued

VARIABLE	PERCENT WHO MOVED		
	1975-78	1978-79	1979-80
AGE			
16-19	33.2	13.3	
20-24	38.4	14.7	11.6
25-34	37.9	14.9	11.2
35-44	34.2	12.4	8.8
45-54	32.5	12.1	5.8
55-64	36.5	10.0	8.8
65 and over	43.3	7.1	5.2
(N)	(7,974)	(5,962)	(5,576)
SEX			
Male	36.6	13.4	10.4
Female	35.0	13.4	8.7
(N)	(7,974)	(5,962)	(5,576)

Source: Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File.

Note: Missing cases were eliminated from the calculations. To obtain number of missing cases, subtract N from total sample size of 7,974 in 1975-1978, from 5,962 in 1978-1979 and from 5,576 in 1979-1980.

In general, a refugee's background prior to flight seemed to have little impact on the likelihood of the individual's moving from the state of initial settlement. There are some indications that former enlisted men in the South Vietnamese Army, and persons who claimed to have worked in manufacturing occupations were more likely to move than others. In all cases, however, the differences in mobility rates among various groups based on Indochinese background are too slight to support a general conclusion about the characteristics of movers and stayers.

Data on the resettlement experience show a much more marked influence. The amount of time the refugee spent in a relocation camp, whether the individual came to the U.S alone or as a member of a family, success in finding a sponsor, and the state of settlement all had substantial impact on the tendency for a refugee to move across state boundaries in the first five years in the U.S. For example, 39 percent of those refugees who were kept in camp for a month or more moved between 1975 and 1978. Only 31 percent of those spending less than 30 days in camp moved.[39] Roughly the same differences in mobility can be observed for persons who came alone versus those who arrived in family units

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[39]It should be recalled, however, that refugees with the longer stays in camp appeared to be among the more disadvantaged.

and for those who lacked sponsors versus those who had them.

The most dramatic influence on propensity to move appears to have been the state of first settlement. Migration patterns among individual states have already been described. They indicate that refugees preferred some states over others. Not suprisingly, refugees who were resettled in states of their choice were less likely to move once there. In fact, only about one-third of them had relocated by 1978. Among refugees who were resettled in states other than the one they preferred, 43 percent had moved to another state by 1978.

While most of the resettlement variables were clearly associated with mobility, the voluntary agency to which the refugee was assigned seemed to have no consistent effect. There was no discernable pattern among agencies servicing large numbers of refugees. Among the volags with relatively small caseloads, some showed relatively high rates of mobility (AFCR and ACNS) while others showed low rates (state of Iowa and the Mormons).[40] Nonetheless, inconsistencies in

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[40]A low rate of out-migration from Iowa was to be expected; the State of Iowa, as noted earlier had decided to resettle a single ethnic group, the Black Thai. This decision turned out to have a remarkable impact on secondary migration in that a Black Thai wanting to settle in a Black Thai community had no choices outside of Iowa. Indochinese other than Black Thai were settled in Iowa by other agencies but the Black Thai were the major refugee population in Iowa in 1975.

the overall pattern and the relatively small number of refugees settled by many of the agencies make it impossible to draw any sweeping conclusions about the performance of individual voluntary agencies without a much more thorough analysis than undertaken here.

A final set of simple crosstabs was also run for the demographic variables, age and sex. Overall, males showed no greater tendency to move than females. Age, however, was clearly a factor. In all three periods, young adults (aged 20 to 34) were more likely to move than others. Persons 65 and over provide one exception to this generalization. In the 1975 to 1978 period they moved more than any group in any period.

Overall, our crosstabulation analysis suggested that the refugee's initial resettlement experience was a key factor in explaining the 1975 cohort's high mobility rate. When the process functioned in such a way as to meet the refugee's perceptions of his or her interests, i.e., the refugee was moved through the camp quickly, assigned a sponsor, and settled in the state of choice, the refugee was much more likely to stay there. When these things did not occur refugees were more likely to move.

In the second stage of the analysis, we attempted to refine our understanding of the role played by background, resettlement, and demographic factors by conducting a regression

analysis. Because most of the variables are measured on nominal scales, a dummy regression approach was required. A simple dichotomous variable measuring mobility was used as a dependent variable. Dichotomous or dummy variables were also created for the independent variables in the background, resettlement, and demographic groups. In addition to the variables in the just-described crosstabulation analysis, we also used the state of original settlement and a variable indicating placement in an area with a concentration of Indochinese.

We began our analysis with a stepwise approach to verify the results of the crosstabulations. These early regressions strongly suggested that there was very little explanatory power attached to a number of the background variables such as prior military service and education. The dummies for some occupations likewise "fell out", but others seemed worth keeping. In the end, the complete range of occupational dummies was retained.

Perhaps the most interesting outcome of the stepwise regressions was the discovery of the interrelatedness of several important variables in the resettlement category. A short length of time in camp, being resettled in the state of choice, having a sponsor, having friends or relatives in the U.S., being resettled in an area with a large concentration of Indochinese, and being resettled in California

all showed reasonably strong association with one another and with staying in the state of original settlement. In order to avoid problems of interpretation because of multicolinearity, a principal components analysis was conducted to reduce these several variables to a single effective measure. A component was extracted, which when computed, presents a scale on which the difficulty of the refugee's resettlement experience was measured.

The scale for the resettlement difficulty index was constructed from five dummy variables: (1) a camp stay of more than two weeks (2) no sponsor found, (3) non-settlement in the preferred state (where these conditions prevailed it was regarded as a sign of a difficult resettlement), (4) settlement in 1975 in a three-digit zip code area with 200 or more Indochinese, and (5) the presence of friends and relatives in the United States. Some of these variables were found to be more significant than others, as Table 19 shows. The index has a range of .85862 indicating a truly grim resettlement experience to -.32491, a felicitious one.[41]

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[41]These extremes are generated by adding the sums of items 1, 2, and 3 to zero responses for items 4 and 5. This sums to .85862. The process is inverted to yield the -.32491.

TABLE 19

Results of Principal Components Analysis Used to Produce Resettlement Difficulty Index

VARIABLE	FACTOR LOADING
(1) In camp more than two weeks	.34716
(2) No sponsor found	.26069
(3) Not settled in prefered state	.25077
(4) Settled in three-digit zip code area with more than 200 Indochinese	-.12642
(5) Relatives or friends in U.S.	-.19849

Note: For computation and utility of this index, see text.

At the conclusion of the stepwise regression and principal components analyses we were able to specify the exact variables to be used to estimate regression equations for each of the three time periods under study. Eight characteristics (17 dummy variables in all) were used as independent variables against the dependent variable, mobility. Two of the variables, age at the beginning of the migration period and the resettlement difficulty index were used in their raw form. Sex, family status at time of resettlement, state of residence, occupation in Indochina, voluntary agency, and employment status (1978-1979 and 1979-1980 only) were coded into dummy variables. A base case was established consisting of a female who had fled Indochina with her family, was resettled outside of California and Texas, had worked in a blue collar but non-service occupation in Indochina, was resettled by the USCC, and was unemployed in the U.S. This base case was used as a benchmark for comparison of changes in likelihood of migration as a result of changes in independent variables. In this instance, the probability that such a woman would move across state lines between 1975 and 1978 was estimated at about 44 out of 100, or .44. This is relatively close to the actual proportion of the refugee population that moved during this period.

Results of the regression for the 1975-1978 period are reported in Table 20 and show a number of interesting things. First, with the exception of the clerical group, occupation in Indochina had no effect on the likelihood of a refugee moving. Another woman with the same characteristics as the one in the base case except being employed in a clerical occupation in Indochina is somewhat less likely to move but only marginally so (p=.39).

The resettlement variables have a much more dramatic effect. Refugees who were originally resettled in California were very unlikely movers. For our base case woman, resettling her in California rather than in another state would have lowered the probability that she would move to about .14. A high rating on the resettlement difficulty index increases the probability as does migration from Indochina as a single adult rather than within a family. Finally, if this women were settled by either the Lutherans or the Church World Service the probability that she would relocate between 1975 and 1978 would decrease to approximately .37. Resettlement by one of the other volags would have had no effect.

The regression also suggests that, unlike the results of our crosstabulation analysis, age has no real effect on propensity to move while sex does. While the crosstabulations showed no real difference in mobility rates between males and females, the regression results indicate that

TABLE 20

Results of Regressions Using Interstate Migration Between 1975 and 1978

VARIABLE	B
OCCUPATION IN INDOCHINA	
Professional	.01889
Clerical	-.04658*
Service	-.01771
No occupation reported	-.00174
RESETTLEMENT DIFFICULTY INDEX	.03799*
FAMILY STATUS	
Migrated alone	.06912*
STATE OF INITIAL RESETTLEMENT	
California	-.30083*
Texas	-.06469*
VOLUNTARY AGENCY	
LIRS	-.07174*
IRC	-.01989
CWS	-.09011*
HIAS	-.03447
Other Volag	.02993
No Volag	.03967
AGE IN 1975	-.0021
SEX (Male)	-.0213*
(CONSTANT, i.e., Likelihood of Migration)	.43900
r_2 = .296	standard error = .451
r^2 = .083	F = 20.455

Note: Positive numbers indicate that the variable is positively associated with secondary migration, while negative numbers suggest a negative correlation. For computation and utility, see text.

*Indicates significance at the .05 level.

when other variables are held constant, males were somewhat less likely to move than females (the reverse of Dunning's finding).

Table 21 shows the results of our regressions for the 1978-1979 period. The same variables have been used except that the family variable was dropped and a new variable indicating whether the refugee reported employment during 1978 was added. The age and state of residence variables were updated to 1978.

These results are not terribly different from those for the earlier period. With the exception of those reporting no occupation in Indochina, the occupational variables have no effect. A high score on the resettlement difficulty index increases the likelihood that a refugee will move. Residence in either California or Texas both decrease the probability of migration. The effect of the voluntary agency to which the refugee was assigned is negligible.

There are, however, two important differences from the 1975-1978 equation. First, age becomes a factor between 1978 and 1979 with older refugees being much less likely to move than younger ones. Second, a report of employment in 1978 decreases the probability that the refugee will move; movers were less likely to be employed than stayers.[42]

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[42]See Chapter 4 for a parallel finding regarding earnings of movers and stayers.

TABLE 21

Results of Regressions Using Interstate Migration Between 1978 and 1979

VARIABLE	B
OCCUPATION IN INDOCHINA	
Professional	-.00804
Clerical	-.00419
Service	-.00615
No occupation reported	-.03267*
RESETTLEMENT DIFFICULTY INDEX	.03843*
STATE OF RESIDENCE-1979	
California	-.15208
Texas	-.10780*
VOLUNTARY AGENCY	
LIRS	.00838
IRC	.01761
CWS	-.00914
HIAS	-.00283*
Other Volag	-.02952*
No Volag	.08980*
AGE IN 1978	-.00080*
SEX (Male)	-.00791
EMPLOYED IN 1978	-.01906*
(CONSTANT)	.22872
r_2 = .235	standard error = .327
r^2 = .051	F = 12.589

Note: For computation and utility, see text.

*Indicates significance at the .05 level.

The equation for the last period, shown in Table 22,is different in other ways. Of the 16 dummy variables in the equation only five have any effect, i.e., have significant coefficients. Clerical occupation in Indochina surfaces again as a negative effect on probability of migration. So does assignment to HIAS for resettlement. Residence in California or Texas continues as a strong influence but the resettlement difficulty index is no longer a factor. Age continues to have some influence.

What does all of this mean? First, it suggests very strongly that the background of a refugee prior to his/her flight has had less impact on propensity to migrate than the refugee's resettlement experience. Refugees who were moved quickly through the camps, were assigned sponsors, and allowed to settle in places of their liking, tended to stay in those places. Those who were sent to places where they did not want to go, often without the benefit of sponsors or even the beginnings of an Indochinese community, left in relatively short order. The result was a great deal of movement in the first few years after resettlement.

TABLE 22

Results of Regressions Using Interstate Migration Between 1979 and 1980

VARIABLE	B
OCCUPATION IN INDOCHINA	
Professional	.00387
Clerical	-.03372*
Service	-.00396
No occupation reported	-.01004
RESETTLEMENT DIFFICULTY INDEX	.01538
STATE OF RESIDENCE-1979	
California	-.11638*
Texas	-.04360*
VOLUNTARY AGENCY	
LIRS	.00679
IRC	-.00166
CWS	.00283
HIAS	-.04083*
Other Volag	.00177
No Volag	.02907
AGE IN 1979	-.00158*
SEX (Male)	.00433
EMPLOYED IN 1979	-.00607
(CONSTANT)	.19587

r	= .212	standard error	= .2813
r^2	= .041	F	= 10.077

Note: For computation and utility, see text.

*Indicates significance at the .05 level.

Second, through the three periods we can slowly see the effects of flight and resettlement diminish as migration is influenced more by age and less by the resettlement index. The overall picture one gets by the 1979 to 1980 period is that of young people moving to the west and south, something very different from the immediate years after resettlement, and something quite typical of other Americans.

What are the policy implications? To a large extent they depend on what policy goals the government seeks in this regard. Clearly, there is a great deal of concern over secondary migration. This concern has not run so deep, however, that the government levies sanctions against refugees who move from the place of their initial resettlement. If the Government wants a substantial majority of refugees to stay where they are placed, its needs to assure itself and the refugees concerned that the first few weeks go as smoothly as possible. It should also recall, from the experience with the Cubans in the '60s and the Vietnamese in the '70s, that it is difficult, and not terribly productive, to resettle people in places where they do not want to be.

CHAPTER 4: THE 1975 REFUGEES AND THE LABOR MARKET

One of the first and most difficult things a newly-arrived refugee must do is find work. The degree of difficulty is influenced by a number of factors including the health of the economy of the host country and the magnitude of the cultural barriers that exist between the sending and receiving societies.

In the case of the 1975 Indochinese refugees, both of these factors worked strongly against finding work quickly. The U.S. unemployment rate, which stood at 8.5 percent in 1975, remained at or above 7 percent during the next two years. In addition, the Indochinese were this country's first non-Western refugee group and the cultural barriers they faced were much greater than those faced by the Hungarian freedom fighters or the Cubans. It is little wonder that many refugees had difficulty finding jobs.

In the course of this chapter, as background, we outline what other researchers have reported about the changing labor-market patterns of the 1975 cohort. The related issue of the levels of earnings in this labor force is covered in the Chapter 5.

A. Concepts Used

There are three principal ways of measuring how well a population is doing in the labor market. The best known is the unemployment rate, which indicates the portion of the workforce that cannot find work. Some analyses also focus on the labor force participation rate, which reports the portion of the population either working or seeking work. The newest and in some ways most useful measure is the employment-to-population ratio (EPR) which simply compares those working against the total population or that portion of the total which is of employable age.

The problem with the unemployment rate and the labor force participation rate (though both are useful tools) is that both concepts struggle with the question of whether a non-working individual is seeking work. If an individual is actually trying to find a job, but has failed, then the worker is regarded as unemployed and but still a labor force participant. When and if that individual becomes discouraged and stops seeking a job, he or she drops out of the labor force. When this discouragement occurs on a large scale, both the unemployment and the labor force participation rates drop. As should be obvious, the measurement and definitional problems associated with both of these concepts are immense.

There are fewer such problems with the EPR. Because it requires only two relatively easy to secure numbers, i. e. the total number of persons working and the total population in the desired age range, the computation is very straightforward.

We refer to all three of these concepts in the course of this chapter. Our own analysis, however, was conducted primarily with EPRs.

B. Early Reports

Despite the inherent problems facing the 1975 refugees, the HEW's December 31, 1978 Report to Congress was full of good news:

> Vietnamese refugees who reached the United States in 1975 continued to make gains in employment and income, according to the sixth survey of a national sample of the refugees conducted in November-December 1978. Among those 16 years of age and older included in the labor force (working or looking for work), 94.9 percent were employed (95.2 percent of the men and 94.3 percent of the women). This compares with 94.5 percent among all Americans (95.3 percent among men and 93.3 percent among women). Since the first survey was taken in July 1975, the employment rate of Vietnamese refugees has risen from 68.2 percent among men to the present level of 95.2 percent, and from 50.9 percent among women to the present 94.3 percent.[43]

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[43]U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Report to the Congress, Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program (Washington: HEW, December 31, 1978), p.7.

Darrel Montero, who like HEW relied on the OSI surveys for his raw data, wrote encouragingly:

> Since arriving in the United States, most of the Vietnamese have found jobs...by the time of the Fifth (OSI) survey, September and October 1977, the [employment] rate had risen to a remarkable 95 percent.[44]

HEW also reported that the labor force participation rates of adult refugees "...continued to be closely comparable to those for the U.S. population as a whole: 63.4 percent for refugees of both sexes as compared to 63.6 percent for all Americans; for males, 74.4 percent among refugees as compared to 77.6 percent; and for females, 49.4 percent for refugees as compared to 51.0 percent."[45]

If one reads the last quotation closely one may wonder why there is only a .2 percent difference between the labor force participation rates of all refugees and the total U.S. population, but a 3.2 percent difference for the men and a 1.6 percent difference for the women. The calculations are correct, but the comparison is inappropriate. HEW was comparing a predominantly male refugee population (16 and over) with a more evenly balanced U.S. population (16 and over.) Further, there is the question of the age distribution of the population over 16. In 1975, only 1.8 percent

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[44]Darrel Montero, Vietnamese Americans: Patterns of Resettlement and Socioeconomic Adaptation in the United States (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979), p. 42.
[45]HEW, Report to the Congress, (December, 1978), p. 8.

of the refugee population 16 and over was over the age of 65, while fully 14.4 percent of the U. S. adult population had passed their 65th birthday.

In an effort to secure labor force participation data on roughly comparable populations (dealing only with the variables of age and sex) three of us at TransCentury in 1979 collected the statistics shown in Table 23 and annotated them with an elaborate footnote. That footnote follows:

> With one exception (not taking into account the higher percentage of children among the Indochinese refugees than among Americans in the all-persons data) all of the methodological biases in Table [23] inflate Indochinese labor force participation rates. In the first three comparisons, the Indochinese labor force participation data, but not that of other Americans, are based on a telephone survey, and it is probable that persons without telephones are less likely to be in the labor force than those with phones. In the last comparison the extent of the bias can be estimated more exactly, as the measure of labor force participation for the Indochinese but not for other Americans is the extent to which they made social security tax contributions. This measure produces a cumulative total of workers during a year, an individual with a few weeks of work counts as much as one with a full year's work; the measure used for other Americans is the average size of the labor force during the entire year. If one were to correct for this discrepancy, as we have not done in Table [23], one would adjust the labor force participation rates downward in the persons 20-59 comparison by five points for the Indochinese men, and by about three points for the women.[46]

Table 23 shows, contrary to HEW's 1978 report, that in six of the seven age- and sex-specific comparisons available,

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[46]Taft, North, and Ford, Refugee Resettlement in the U.S., p. 132.

TABLE 23

Labor Force Participation Rates, Various U.S. and Indochinese Refugee Populations, 1976-1978

POPULATION	LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES		
	U.S.	REFUGEES	DIFFERENCE
ALL PERSONS ALL AGES	45.9	38.4	-7.5
PERSONS 16 AND OVER			
Male	78.3	74.4	-3.9
Female	48.5	49.4	+0.9
PERSONS 16-65			
Male	85.8	77.8	-8.0
Female	55.9	53.4	-2.5
PERSONS 20-59			
Male	92.6	87.0	-5.6
Female	58.9	54.0	-4.9

Sources: All Persons All Ages: For U.S. workers, population of U.S. in 1977 from Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1978, Table 2 divided by total U.S. labor force, 1977, from Employment and Training Report of the President, 1978, Table A-1; for Indochinese workers, calculated from HEW, Report to the Congress, Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program, December 31, 1978, Tables 8 and 10. Persons 16 and Over: For U.S. workers from Employment and Training Report of the President, Table A-1 (1977 data); Indochinese workers (1978 data) from Report to the Congress, IRAP, op. cit., Tables 8 and 10. Persons 16-65: U.S. workers, 1977 data, calculated from Employment and Training Report, 1978, Table A-2 and Statistical Abstract, 1978, Table 29; Indochinese workers, 1978 data, calculated from Report to the Congress, IRAP, Tables 8 and 10 (i.e., telephone survey data). The latter data were adjusted to include 63 and 64 year olds; all Indochinese workers over the age of 65 are treated as if they were under 65, thus slightly overstating the refugee labor force participation rate. Persons 20-59: For U.S. workers from Employment and Training Report, 1978, Table A-2 and Statistical Abstract, 1977, Table 28; Indochinese workers, 1976 data from Social Security Bulletin, March 1979, p. 29.

TAKEN FROM: Julia V. Taft, David North, and David Ford, Refugee Resettlement in the U.S.: Time for a New Focus (Washington: New TransCentury Foundation, 1979).

refugees had lower force participation rates than other Americans.

C. Later Studies

Robert and Jennifer Bach, using Alien Address cards (INS form I-53) to study refugee labor market experience, reported that EPRs calculated from the January, 1979 INS data and from an OSI survey in the spring of that year were remarkably close to, but smaller than, those for the balance of the U. S. population.[47] The EPRs reported by the Bachs are as follows:

Population	EPR		
	Total	Men	Women
U.S. Civilian	58.9	72.6	46.6
Refugee:			
INS	53.3	62.6	42.6
OSI	54.4	67.7	37.7

The Bachs offered three other findings:

- While the refugees' labor force participation rates were below those of other U. S. residents, their unemployment rates were lower than those of comparable U. S. workers.
- Employment-to-population ratios varied by nation of birth, with the 1979 ratios (for those 16 and over) being 54.7 percent for those from Vietnam, 55.7 percent for Cambodia, and 38.5 percent for Laos.

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[47]See Robert L. Bach and Jennifer B. Bach, "Employment Patterns of Southeast Asian Refugees," Monthly Labor Review (October 1980).

- Employment-to-population ratios varied from state to state, with the average being 53.2 percent. Of states with large refugee populations, the California EPR was the lowest at 46.1 percent. Texas reported the highest at 63.5 percent with the other five states with large refugee populations falling between the extremes.

The Bachs also felt that there was evidence that the year of arrival in the U.S. influenced labor force partication. (See Table 24.) Without better longitudinal data, however, it is impossible to determine whether this increase in labor foce activity was attributable to the passage of time or the differing characteristics of later arrivals.

Dunning's 1980 interviews also suggested that year of arrival influenced labor force participation. The group with the highest adult labor force participation rates arrived in 1976 (70.9 percent), followed by the 1975 group (62.1 percent), 1977 (57.0 percent), 1978 (48.4 percent) and 1979 (34.3 percent).[48] The high rate for the 1976 cohort was probably due to the elite nature of the refugees that year, a high percentage of whom bought their way out of Vietnam with gold bars.[49]

Dunning's survey also showed a strong relationship between years of education and labor force participation,

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[48]Dunning, Survey of the Social, Psychological, and Economic Adaptation of Vietnamese Refugees, p. 112.
[49]Conversation with Dunning, 1982.

TABLE 24

U.S. Labor Market Activity in 1979 of Southeast Asian Refugees 16 and Over by Year of Entry and Sex

YEAR OF ENTRY	EMPLOYMENT RATIO (Immigration Service)		LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION (Opportunity Systems, Inc)	
	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN
Pre-1975	74.1	54.2		
1975	70.0	46.1	69.1	42.9
1976	64.2	36.2	65.5	34.4
1977	58.8	41.0	58.4	29.6
1978	33.5	19.0		
1979	13.8	28.6		

Source: Taken from Robert L. Bach and Jennifer B. Bach, "Employment Patterns of Southeast Asian Refugees," Monthly Labor Review (October, 1980), Table 1.

with labor force activity rising in each of five educational categories. Participation rates varied from a low of 16.5 percent for those with no education to a high of 84.5 percent for those with 17 years or more. Likewise, those who spoke English well at the time of the interview had a participation rate of 70.9 percent, compared to those with little or no English at 25.5 percent.

Although the Bachs alluded to the well-accepted notion that the Hmong were having a particularly difficult time in the labor market, they could not distinguish the Hmong from other Laotians. It remained for Dennis White's 1982 Orange County (CA) study to provide comparable data on four Indochinese ethnic groups.[50] This survey of 534 refugees aged 18 and over reported labor force participation rates of 43 percent for Vietnamese, 29 percent for Laotians, 24 percent for Cambodians, and only 14 percent for Hmong refugees. Similarly, in his survey, Dunning distinguished between Vietnamese respondents, who had a 1980 labor force participation rate of 56 percent, and the Sino Vietnamese (generally later arrivals) who had a rate of 45.0 percent.[51]

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[50] Capturing the Change: The Impact of Indochinese Refugees in Orange County; Challenges and Opportunities (Santa Ana: Immigrant and Refugee Planning Center, 1982), p.31.
[51] Dunning, Survey of Vietnamese Refugees, p. 112.

Relatively little is known about the relationship between secondary migration and labor force participation. The previously-mentioned study by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services concluded that "..it is taking the secondary migrants (who comprise almost one-half of the caseload) longer to enter the labor force than direct settlers. This fact exists despite the fact that these individuals appear to be better prepared educationally for employment than those who settled in Los Angeles directly..."[52]

D. Employment-to-Population Ratios of the 1975 Cohort Over Time

The data available to us on the 1975 cohort's EPRs were drawn from the INS alien address cards filed in January of 1978, 1979, and 1980. In general, the 1978 data provided a less satisfactory basis for EPR estimations than other years. The 1978 question asked about occupation rather than employment. If an occupation was listed the refugee was regarded as working; if the block was blank, or indicated a non-paid activity (e.g. student, housewife) then the person was regarded as not working. In 1979 and 1980 the

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[52]Los Angeles County, Department of Public Social Services, Report on a Survey of Indochinese Refugee Assistance Payments Case Characteristics, (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County, June 1980), p. 3.

question was, "Are you employed?" Yes and no boxes were to be checked.

In Table 25 we have arrayed the EPRs of the 1975 cohort and the U.S. population by age and sex. The table indicates that refugee EPRs increased with each passing year, that the rates for men were higher than those for women, and that the rates fell sharply after the 45th birthday. Further, and more significantly, the EPR for refugees caught up with that of the rest of the nation in 1980, with refugee rates for those between 25 and 44 substantially ahead of those of other Americans. Table 25 indicates that the EPR for Americans, generally, fell between 1979 and 1980. This decline may be explained in part by the fact that the denominator in 1979 was the Census Bureau estimate for that year, while in 1980 it was the actual Census count. (The Census Bureau, underestimating the population in 1979, was surprised at how many people it counted in 1980.)

We also had access to additional EPR data for the refugees from the Social Security Administration (SSA) for the years 1976 through 1979. For purposes of calculating EPRs, we allowed that persons reporting earnings to SSA were all of those who were working. Since the Social Security data covered all employment, no matter how short-lived, in the course of the year, while the INS data inquired

TABLE 25

Employment-Population Ratios of the 1975 Refugees and the U.S. Population, by Sex and Age Group, 1978-1980
(as percents)

AGE GROUP	1978				1979				1980			
	MALES		FEMALES		MALES		FEMALES		MALES		FEMALES	
	REFUGEES	U.S. POPULATION	REFUGEES	U.S. POPULATION	REFUGEES	U.S. POPULATION	REFUGEES	U.S. POPULATION	REFUGEES	U.S. POPULATION	REFUGEES	U.S. POPULATION
20-24	54.8	72.6	41.3	60.9	60.1	73.4	46.1	61.9	60.3	68.0	50.0	59.7
25-34	76.5	87.5	53.4	57.7	82.3	87.7	58.2	59.3	87.0	82.9	67.4	58.8
35-44	80.0	90.1	50.2	58.2	81.8	90.2	57.6	60.3	90.1	88.7	65.5	62.3
45-54	74.3	87.6	33.2	54.5	80.2	87.8	42.3	55.8	84.5	87.1	50.6	56.5
55-64	55.2	70.5	15.0	39.7	56.9	70.1	19.1	40.2	60.5	68.2	25.3	38.5
TOTAL	66.7	82.7	42.4	54.6	73.8	82.3	49.2	56.0	80.8	79.9	58.0	55.6
N	4,424	69,423,000	3,667	76,740,000	3,803	70,763,000	3,027	78,206,000	3,977	73,067,000	3,101	80,994,000

Sources: Data on U.S. population from Statistical Abstract of the United States, for the years 1979, 1980 and 1981, Tables 29 and 650 for 1979 and comparable tables for subsequent years. Data on the 1975 refugees from Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File.

about the refugee's employment status at the time of registration, the Social Security data indicated, as expected, a higher EPR than the INS data.

We also expected that the Social Security data would parallel the INS data and show a rising EPR for the refugees with the passage of time. It did for the women (see Table 26) but did not for the men. The EPR for males aged 20-24 declined from 92.3 percent in 1976 to 85.2 percent in 1979; there were similar drops for each of the other three age groupings. These declines were particularly interesting in the face of INS data which showed that participation was continuing to increase.

What happened? Why did this happen to the men while the women's EPR (on both data bases) continued to increase? The declining incidence of taxable wages among the men could have been caused by one or more of the following:

- Retirement
- Death
- Emigration
- Moving from work to welfare
- Movement into the underground economy

As noted earlier, few of the refugees were old enough to qualify for Social Security retirement benefits and

TABLE 26

Two Measures of the Employment/Population Ratio of the 1975 Refugees, 1976-1980

SEX/AGE	MEASURE	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
MALES						
20-24	SSA	92.3	90.5	86.0	85.2	
	INS			56.7	59.9	66.5
25-34	SSA	92.2	91.9	87.8	86.4	
	INS			77.6	82.4	88.2
35-44	SSA	90.3	90.5	85.5	85.4	
	INS			81.5	83.5	90.1
45-54	SSA	83.7	81.9	77.6	75.9	
	INS			73.9	80.5	82.8
FEMALES						
20-24	SSA	70.7	73.3	73.4	73.9	
	INS			41.9	42.8	54.0
25-34	SSA	63.1	66.2	67.5	69.9	
	INS			53.3	57.9	66.1
35-44	SSA	56.3	62.3	62.8	63.5	
	INS			50.3	58.6	66.7
45-54	SSA	41.9	43.8	44.9	43.5	
	INS			33.6	42.5	45.0

Sources: Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File and SSA Tabulations.

Concepts Used: INS data from alien address cards filed in January of the years noted. Percentages noted are of persons with a stated occupation to all persons in 1978, and persons employed to all persons in 1979 and 1980. SSA data show percentage of population with recorded FICA earnings (both wage and salary workers and self-employed persons). Since Social Security data cover a whole year and the INS data reflect the individual's status at the time the card was filed, SSA percentages would be expected to be higher than INS percentages.

the declining rates for the men aged 45-54 are not much different from those for younger men. Retirement is not suggested. Similarly, deaths among this population (aged 20-54) could not be expected to be a significant factor. There has been virtually no emigration of the Vietnamese since one boatload of them opted to return to Vietnam from Guam in 1975. The remaining, viable options are an increased use of welfare, or a transfer into the cash economy.

Many refugees continued to draw refugee cash assistance and other benefits in 1979. As noted elsewhere in this report, refugee EPRs tend to be lower in states with generous welfare systems (e.g., California) than in the less generous states (e.g., Texas). But there is no clear evidence of increased use of assistance programs by the 1975 cohort, over time, to account for the steadily dropping EPR for the male refugees. ORR data show relatively stable welfare utilization as do OSI data on the same subject (see Table 27.) Further, the increasing EPRs reflected in the INS statistics also suggest that increased welfare use is not the answer.[53]

It is also useful to recall the basic condition of the overall U. S. labor market during these four years.

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[53]The laws and regulations on the payment of Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) during this period were not a factor; it was not until April, 1981 that a time limit was placed on the payment of RCA, and that date was after the end of our study period.

TABLE 27

Four Economic Indicators for the Years 1976-1979

ECONOMIC INDICATOR	1976	1977	1978	1979
1. Unemployment Rates, National Averages	7.7%	7.0%	6.0%	5.8%
2. Unemployment Rates, Black Males	12.7	12.4	10.9	10.3
3. Welfare Utilization Rate Reported by Office of Refugee Resettlement, HHS	29.8	34.6	33.1	37.3*
4. Welfare Utilization Rate Reported by OSI Survey	49.9**	33.4	32.0	26.8

Sources: Lines 1 and 2 from Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1981, Table 661. Line 3 from Office of Refugee Resettlement, Report to the Congress, Refugee Resettlement Program (Washington: Department of Health and Human Services, January 31, 1981), Table 13. Line 4 from Opportunity Systems, Inc., Indochinese Resettlement Operational Feedback reports for Waves Three, Four, Five, and Six (Table 33).

*The increase in the ORR-reported welfare utilization rate for 1979 reflected the rate for all refugees, not just the members of the 1975 cohort. There were relatively few admissions in 1976, 1977, and 1978, but in 1979 the "boat people" and others began to arrive in substantial numbers, increasing the percentage of refugees receiving cash assistance. Further, that the ORR percentage is about ten points higher than the OSI percentage is explained, at least in part, because the ORR data were based on August of that year, while the OSI data were collected in the spring.

**Includes medical assistance not included in subsequent years.

As Table 27 indicates, the overall unemployment rate, though relatively high, fell steadily from 7.7 percent in 1976 to 5.8 percent in 1979. Black males, another disadvantaged population, recorded above-average but declining unemployment rates in those years. These statistics do not support a theory that unemployment increased among the 1975 cohort during this period.

We are left, then, with a movement into the cash economy, and thereafter disappearance from the Social Security rolls. Without first-hand knowledge of the matter, it appears that such a movement would be a logical (if a shortsighted and illegal) development. Saigon was not known for its fiscal fastidiousness, nor is there any Indochinese tradition of being rewarded later (with a pension) for paying one's taxes (social security) now. Many refugees work in small service establishments, such as restaurants, where cash payments are common. Finally, with the passage of time a growing number of refugees became employers in the service and fishing sectors, hiring other refugees, and perhaps ignoring the withholding laws in the process.

Meanwhile, how does one explain the slightly increasing EPRs for the female refugees? One possibility is that these rates, in fact, were increasing much more rapidly than the SSA data in Table 26 suggest because many of the women were also entering the underground labor market.[54] Perhaps refugee women are somewhat less likely than refugee men to work in situations where taxes are not paid. Fishing, for example, is a largely male occupation.

Whereas Table 25 (where refugee information is based on INS data) indicated that the EPRs of the 1975 cohort had approached the U. S. norm in 1980, Table 28 (based on SSA data) indicates the opposite trend. The SSA-based EPRs of the total population increased slightly in these years while those of refugees declined. Had the EPRs of the total population declined through these years it might suggest that the same basic trends were operating on the refugees as well, but this was not the case.[55]

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[54]Note the 1978-1979 changes in the INS data base of five to nine points in Table 26 and compare that to the much smaller increases recorded in the SSA data base in the same period.

[55]While it is appropriate to compare the trendlines of the refugee EPRs (which are down) and those of other Americans (which are up) it is less appropriate to compare the EPRs per se. This is the case because the EPRs of the population generally are over-stated because of yet another statistical complication; the SSA data used in Table 28 includes at least three groups not counted in the population base, members of the armed forces overseas, green card commuters (who live in Mexico or Canada and who work in the States) and, most importantly, illegal aliens working in the US.

TABLE 28

The SSA Measure of the Employment/Population Ratio of the 1975 Refugees and the U.S. Population,* by Sex and Age, 1976-1979

SEX/AGE	MEASURE	1976	1977	1978	1979	N**
MALES						
20-24	Refugee	92.3	90.5	86.0	85.2	3,739
	U.S.	94.9	95.2	95.9	99.3	9,939,423
25-34	Refugee	92.2	91.9	87.8	86.4	6,156
	U.S.	92.8	92.9	94.1	96.7	16,409,307
35-44	Refugee	90.3	90.5	85.5	85.4	3,208
	U.S.	87.9	89.3	90.2	89.9	11,677,246
45-54	Refugee	83.7	81.9	77.6	75.9	1,810
	U.S.	80.0	79.6	80.6	79.4	11,772,567
FEMALES						
20-24	Refugee	70.7	73.3	73.4	73.9	2,617
	U.S.	77.4	79.2	82.2	83.1	9,792,980
25-34	Refugee	63.1	66.2	67.5	69.9	4,385
	U.S.	62.7	65.1	68.9	71.6	16,275,200
35-44	Refugee	56.3	62.3	62.8	63.5	2,634
	U.S.	57.6	60.1	63.1	64.2	11,727,678
45-54	Refugee	41.9	43.8	44.9	43.5	1,430
	U.S.	52.7	53.8	55.5	56.5	12,188,707

Sources: Refugee data from SSA Tabulations. Data for U.S. workers computed from Jeffrey S. Passel (Census Bureau) "National Population Estimates for 1970-1980 Consistent with Preliminary Results from Demographic Analysis," January 4, 1982 (mimeo), and Social Security Administration, Social Security Bulletin, Annual Statistical Supplement, for the years cited, Table 35.

*EPRs for U.S. workers generally, particularly young men, are inflated by statistical artifacts (see text).

**Ns for refugees are the same for each year; Ns noted for U.S. population are for 1976.

One can detect additional confirmation of the apparent movement of the 1975 refugees out of Social-Security-covered jobs in an unpublished article written by Harold Grossman of SSA.[56] The key set of statistics in this preliminary study, covering the years 1975 through 1978, is shown in different ways in Tables 29 and 30. The population of particular interest to us is covered in the bottom eight lines of table 29, the 27,678 men and 11,032 women with 1975 earnings (They must be members of the 1975 cohort.) Of the men, 1.2 percent (336 of the 27,678) dropped out of the system after 1975, and did not return in the ensuing years; 3.1 percent left after 1976 not to return, and 13.5 percent disappeared after 1977. The comparable percentages for women were 4.0 percent, 7.6 percent and 14.4 percent. In total only 82.1 percent of the men who worked in covered employment in 1975 were still there in 1978, while this was the case with 74.0 percent of the women with 1975 work experience.

Two comments are in order. First, 1978 was the first year of a new employer reporting system and the extent of coverage was slightly lower, generally, than in the

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[56]Harold Grossman, "Preliminary Report on OASDHI-Covered Earnings of Indochinese Refugees, 1978", a paper presented at "Social Security and Related Data: Research Resources on Immigration," November 30, 1983. Washington, DC.

TABLE 29

Patterns of OASDHI-Covered Earnings of Indochinese Refugees, by Sex, 1975-1978

PATTERN[1]	WORKERS					
	TOTAL[2]		MALE		FEMALE	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	79,605	100.0	48,707	100.0	30,536	100.0
OOOE	10,706	13.4	5,935	12.2	4,695	15.4
OOEO	2,189	2.7	860	1.8	1,321	4.3
OOEE	7,296	9.2	3,258	6.7	4,006	13.1
OEOO	1,695	2.1	611	1.3	1,078	3.5
OEOE	1,026	1.3	448	0.9	575	1.9
OEEO	3,058	3.8	1,520	3.1	1,521	5.0
OEEE	14,775	18.6	8,397	17.2	6,308	20.7
EOOO	780	1.0	336	0.7	442	1.4
EOOE	290	0.4	143	0.3	145	0.5
EOEO	197	0.2	92	0.2	105	0.3
EOEE	705	0.9	377	0.8	327	1.1
EEOO	1,713	2.2	864	1.8	840	2.8
EEOE	1,152	1.4	679	1.4	471	1.5
EEEO	5,158	6.5	3,656	7.5	1,482	4.9
EEEE	28,865	36.3	21,531	44.2	7,220	23.6

[1] Pattern indicates presence or absence of OASDHI-covered earnings in each of the years 1975-1978, in sequence. "E" indicates presence of covered earnings. For example, "OEOE" indicates covered earnings were reported for 1976 and 1978, but not in 1975 or 1977.

[2] Includes persons with sex unrecorded.

Source: Taken from Harold Grossman (Social Security Administration) "Preliminary Report on OASDHI-Covered Earnings of Indochinese Refugees, 1978," April 1982 (mimeo), Table 3.

TABLE 30

The Rates at Which Experienced Indochinese Workers Left the U.S. Labor Force in 1976, 1977, and 1978

PATTERN	EXPERIENCED	DROPOUTS	PERCENT
Worked in 1975 but not in 1976			
Total*	38,860	1,972	5.1%
Men	27,678	948	3.4
Women	11,032	1,019	9.2
Worked in Either 1975 or 1976 but not in 1977			
Total*	59,414	6,656	11.1
Men	38,654	3,081	8.0
Women	20,514	3,551	17.3
Worked in 1975, 1976, or 1977 but not in 1978			
Total*	68,899	14,790	21.5
Men	42,772	7,939	18.6
Women	25,841	6,789	26.3

*Includes persons with sex unrecorded.

Source: Harold A. Grossman, "Preliminary Report on OASDHI-Covered Earnings of Indochinese Refugees, 1978," Table 3. Social Security Administration, Division of OASDHI Statistics, April 1982.

previous year. This may explain at least part of the 1977-1978 drop in Indochinese participation rates. Second, the bottom eight lines of Table 29 show a steeper drop-off rate among the men than Table 28; this is the case because the two tables reflect data on two different, but overlapping populations. Table 28 covers all the 1975 refugees, including some who did not work in covered employent in 1975, but did in later years. Table 29, on the other hand, covers only the 1975 refugees who worked in 1975. (In addition, the Table 28 population is our study group, identified in a different manner than the SSA study group.)

Despite these methodological complexities it appears from two studies of SSA data that the males in the 1975 cohort are leaving covered employment, apparently because of work in the underground labor market.

In fairness, we should report that SSA generally refuses to believe that this disappearance into the underground economy was as widespread as these data suggest. Harold Grossman, for example, suspects that not all of the 1979 earnings data had been integrated into the system at the time both his tables and our tables were run. As of this writing, SSA has been unable to confirm or deny Grossman's suspicion. Still, an interesting question remains: If not all 1979 earnings had entered the system, why were only Indochinese males affected?

E. Variations in Employment-Population Ratios Within the 1975 Cohort

One of the principal objectives of this study was to determine what relationships if any exist between the characteristics of individual refugees and their experience after arriving in the U.S. In the previous chapter we saw that secondary migration was not a random event, but was a behavior that some refugees were more likely to engage in than others. The balance of this chapter is concerned with how the background and experience of individual refugees, both before and after flight, influenced their experience in the U.S. labor market.

The principal data base for this analysis is the Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File. We had originally hoped to use Social Security Administration data as well, but the inability of SSA to deliver a microdata file limited the utility of that data source.[57]

We have already reported on our analysis of the way in which refugee EPRs varied by age, sex, and length of time in the U.S. Analyses of the influence of other refugee characteristics were also conducted.

The analytical approach was similar to that used for the analysis of secondary migration. The same three categories

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[57]For a complete discussion of the these data files and their sources, see the Appendix.

of data were used: demographic background, principally age and sex (reported on above); background in Indochina including education, occupation, and contact with the U.S. through the military; and experience after leaving Indochina including the camp experience, volag to which the refugee was assigned, and migration behavior. As with secondary migration, we first conducted a cross-tabulation analysis and then took a regression approach.

Our cross tabulations of the Indochinese background focused on education, occupation, and civilian-military status. The effects of education (not shown) seemed consistent with our expectations based on earlier studies; refugess with more education showed a greater likelihood of being employed than those with less. (It is hardly surprising to find such a relationship since one has existed for years among U. S. workers.) The INS data for 1978 showed EPRs for males with only a high school education at about 70 percent, 73 percent for those with college degrees, and over 80 percent for refugees with post-university training. Approximately the same trend, although not as sharply defined, was observable for females.[58]

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[58]Technical difficulties prevented our using the data on those with no education, as the concepts of no data on the subject and no education became blurred in the coding.

We also considered the effect of a refugee's military status prior to flight. (See Table 31.) We discovered that those who had been members of the South Vietnamese armed forces had less difficulty entering the labor force than those who had been civilians. The key factor here was probably a combination of general exposure to American systems as well as the training in occupational skills and language that many received from the American military. Particularly striking were the EPRs of former enlisted men who, trained primarily as mechanics and repairers, were well suited to jobs in U.S. industry despite their lack of formal education.

Our analysis of occupation in Indochina indicated that this was an important influence on the ease with which a refugee found work in the U.S. For men and women, refugees who had worked in white collar occupations, both professional and clerical, were more likely to find work than those who had worked in low skill jobs such as domestic service, agriculture, or fishing (see Table 31). An exception here were males who reported blue collar occupations. These were often enlisted men in the army; the special advantages of this group have already been discussed.

Turning to our measures of the post-arrival experience, the crosstabulations suggested that these may have been less important than the background variables of education

TABLE 31

Employment-Population Ratios of the 1975 Refugees by Civilian/Military Status in Indochina and Occupation in Indochina, by Two Data Sources, 1976-1980

CIVILIAN/MILITARY STATUS AND OCCUPATION IN INDOCHINA	I N S				S S A			
	1978		1980		1976		1979	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
Civilian/Military Status								
Civil Servant	67.4	53.2	74.1	65.9	85.0	65.6	79.4	72.3
Officer	80.5	38.9*	85.8	55.6*	92.5	62.4	86.3	63.5
Enlisted	81.7	55.6*	84.5	66.7*	94.6	52.3	87.9	59.1
Other	59.3	40.5	65.7	45.7	79.7	54.8	75.5	61.3
Occupation in Indochina								
Professional	79.3	61.6	89.5	73.6	86.7	67.1	82.6	71.0
Clerical	72.4	54.9	79.0	74.1	88.1	69.9	81.4	73.9
Manufacturing	76.6	44.2	86.0	52.4	77.5	57.3	86.0	63.3
Construction	70.8	75.0*	86.6	75.0*	78.8	48.3	78.7	71.4
Service	70.5	34.8	82.3	44.8	86.9	44.3	80.9	50.7
Other	66.4	30.9	74.7	38.9	88.2	47.4	77.5	51.9

Source: Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File and SSA Tabulations.

*Based on cell sizes smaller than N=50.

and occupation. Secondary migration seemed to have the greatest impact with state of residence, volag assignment, sponsorship, and clustering having generally declining influences.

Table 32 summarizes our findings on the impact of secondary migration on likelihood of employment. For all periods, we saw evidence that persons who had migrated in the previous year were less likely to be working than those who had stayed put.

The destination state for migrants also had a measured effect. Refugees who had recently moved to California were less likely to be employed than those who moved to other states. This would appear to support the contention of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services that the secondary migrants to their county were less successful than those who settled there initially.

A variable with about the same influence as mobility was state of residence, which is displayed in Table 33. These data show that EPRs for refugees living in California were generally lower than for those living in other states, especially Texas, the state with the second largest refugee population. (Six other comparisons available to us, but not reproduced, all showed the Texas EPR for refugees to be higher than that of California.)

TABLE 32

Employment-Population Ratios of the 1975 Refugees, by Mobility 1975-78 by Two Data Sources, 1978-1980

MOBILITY 1975-78	I N S				S S A	
	1978		1980		1979	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
Stayed in California	65.2	43.0	74.3	52.9	78.4	59.3
Stayed in Texas	70.5	47.2	86.6	58.1	84.7	67.0
Stayed in Other State	70.3	42.4	81.7	55.5	82.4	63.6
Moved to California	56.2	34.3	64.8	38.6	76.7	55.6
Moved to Texas	68.8	25.8	90.0	71.8*	82.1	65.5
Moved to Other State	67.8	40.5	72.4	55.3	80.5	63.8

Source: Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File and SSA Tabulations.

*Based on cell sizes smaller than N-50.

TABLE 33

Employment-Population Ratios of the 1975 Refugees, by State of Residence, by Two Data Sources, 1976-1980

STATE OF RESIDENCE	I N S				S S A			
	1978		1980		1976		1979	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
California	65.8	43.3	73.4	51.8	80.5	52.5	77.6	58.1
Texas	82.6	48.9	87.3	60.3	89.5	57.9	83.8	66.5
Pennsylvania	70.5	41.8	76.5	48.5	87.9	56.0	80.9	62.0
Virginia	83.0	53.2	80.6	60.2	84.7	56.0	79.1	67.6
Florida	72.2*	56.9	66.7	56.9	88.3	54.9	79.9	66.7
Washington	70.1	41.7	82.5	55.6	83.7	55.7	83.6	67.5
New York	72.3	51.2*	82.5	55.3	84.5	50.9	82.1	61.5
Illinois	77.5	45.0*	72.6	55.9*	88.8	58.3	84.6	63.1
Other	77.0	49.8	82.5	55.8	87.2	56.4	82.3	62.9

Source: Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File and SSA Tabulations.

*Based on cell sizes smaller than N-50.

One possible explanation of the Texas-California differences in Tables 32 and 33 is that those who moved to Texas did so because they thought that jobs were relatively plentiful and welfare levels low there, while those moving to California were aware of the generous welfare system in that state. Perhaps the kind of population moving to Texas was, from the start, different (or at least had different expectations) from the population moving to California. Our analysis supports, but does not prove, such a theory.

The remaining variables, volag, sponsor, and clustering, appear to have been less significant than those mentioned above. As shown in Table 34, the Tolstoy Foundation had the highest EPR in four of the six available comparisons, while USCC had more than its share of low EPRs. However, as noted earlier, USCC appeared to have absorbed a more disadvantaged group than other volags. While the difference in EPRs, by volag, were not large, they appeared to persist over the years. One of the minor surprises of the study was the slight negative relationship that seemed to exist between sponsor presence (back in 1975) and EPRs in subsequent years. Those who had no sponsor were more likely to have a job than those who did have a sponsor. (See Table 34). The crosstabulation of EPR by size of cluster (see Table 35) shows relatively little variation, but higher EPRs are always associated with middle-sized or smaller clusters.

TABLE 34

Employment-Population Ratios of the 1975 Refugees, by Whether Refugee Had a Sponsor and Voluntary Agency Assignment, by Two Data Sources, 1976-1980

SPONSORSHIP AND VOLUNTARY AGENCY ASSIGNMENT	I N S				S S A			
	1978		1980		1976		1979	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
Sponsor								
Yes	66.6	40.7	78.7	54.4	84.7	54.9	80.6	61.9
No	72.5	40.9	82.5	53.8	89.4	56.5	83.4	62.5
Voluntary Agency								
USCC	67.4	39.4	77.4	51.6	83.3	53.3	77.9	59.9
LIRS	72.1	39.5	80.3	57.5	86.8	58.1	83.4	64.2
IRC	65.9	45.5	74.6	60.4	84.7	55.8	82.5	64.6
CWS	67.2	43.3	77.7	55.7	88.3	57.0	82.7	64.2
HIAS	54.8	41.3*	85.2	56.5*	85.3	51.2	81.7	59.3
TF	74.4	40.9*	81.1	52.3*	89.4	59.2	81.9	66.3
AFCR	78.9*	80.0*	78.9*	40.0*	88.6	45.2	84.6	59.7
ACNS	67.9*	25.0*	78.6*	33.3*	85.1	48.3	81.5	53.9
Other	59.1	37.9	79.6	53.7	83.6	55.4	82.0	61.8

Source: Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File and SSA Tabulations.

*Based on cell sizes smaller than N=50.

TABLE 35

Employment-Population Ratios of the 1975 Refugees
by Size of Cluster and Sex
1978-1980

SIZE OF CLUSTER*	1978		1979		1980	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
Over 2,000	63.4	39.1	68.8	42.4	77.9	52.2
1,000-2,000	63.4	37.5	72.5	44.2	77.7	54.3
500-1,000	66.7	43.2	73.4	53.1	79.6	58.0
200-500	67.4	41.0	75.2	50.3	81.9	57.4
Less than 200	66.9	43.0	72.6	48.2	79.7	55.1
N	4,507	3,666	3,882	3,152	4,061	3,259

Source: Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File.

*In 1979.

The significance of this is diminished, however, when we recall that the largest of the clusters are in California, where refugee EPRs are lower than those of most other states.

The patterns suggested by the crosstabulations were made clearer still by our regression analysis. We estimated separate equations for males and females and for each of three years in which we had INS data, i.e., 1978, 1979, and 1980. In all cases we used dichotomous dependent variables to indicate employment. Dummies were created for age, migrating outside of a family unit, occupation, secondary migration, state of residence, educational attainment, and membership in the armed services. We also included the resettlement difficulty index developed in the analysis of secondary migration. Readers should note that the variables used in the equations for females differed somewhat from those used in the equations for males. The dummy for blue collar occupation in Indochina in the male list was replaced with a dummy for service occupation. In addition, the equations for females did not use the indicators of membership in the South Vietnamese military. For both males and females, the variable indicating migration outside of a family unit was not used for the 1980 equations since a preliminary analysis suggested that the effects of this phenomenon were probably ameliorated by that time. The results of the regressions are reported in Tables 36 through 41.

TABLE 36

Results of Regression Analysis of Refugee Employment in 1978, Males Only

VARIABLE	B
AGE	
Under 35	-.08812*
55 or over	-.23539*
MIGRATED OUTSIDE OF A FAMILY	.02691
MOVED OVER STATE LINES IN PREVIOUS YEAR	-.04646*
STATE OF RESIDENCE IN 1978	
California	-.08825*
Texas	.01973
OCCUPATION IN INDOCHINA	
Professional	.14343*
Clerical	.11479*
Blue Collar	.07432*
VOLUNTARY AGENCY ASSIGNMENT	
USCC	.03705*
LIRC	.08477
IRC	.01049
CWS	.01188
HIAS	-.10440*
None	.09178*
RESETTLEMENT INDEX (a measure of the degree of difficulty of resettlement)	-.05600*
ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH	-.02806*
MILITARY STATUS	
Officer	.11494*
Enlisted Man	.19328*
EDUCATION	
Completed at least high school	.07329*
(CONSTANT)	.60386
r_2 = .32923	
r^2 = .10839	

Note: For computation and utility, see text.

*Indicates significance at the .05 level.

TABLE 37

Results of Regression Analysis of Refugee Employment in 1979, Males Only

VARIABLE	B
AGE	
Under 35	-.08354*
55 and over	-.24502*
MIGRATED OUTSIDE OF A FAMILY	.01040
MOVED OVER STATE LINES IN PREVIOUS YEAR	-.09652*
STATE OF RESIDENCE IN 1979	
California	-.11537*
Texas	.06519*
OCCUPATION IN INDOCHINA	
Professional	.11122*
Clerical	.09173*
Blue Collar	.10889*
VOLUNTARY AGENCY ASSIGNMENT	
USCC	-.02566
LIRS	.00299
IRC	-.01178
CWS	.00115
HIAS	-.01332
None	.04204*
RESETTLEMENT INDEX (a measure of the degree of difficulty of resettlement)	-.08703*
ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH	-.02571*
MILITARY STATUS	
Officer	.11113*
Enlisted Man	.15078*
EDUCATION	
Completed at least high school	.06359*
(CONSTANT)	.71737
r = .33445	
r^2 = .11185	

Note: For computation and utility, see text.

*Indicates significance at the .05 level.

TABLE 38

Results of Regression Analysis of Refugee Employment in 1980, Males Only

VARIABLE	B
AGE	
Under 35	-.06668*
55 and over	-.28706*
MOVED OVER STATE LINES IN PREVIOUS YEAR	-.01272
STATE OF RESIDENCE IN 1980	
California	-.07592*
Texas	.02638
OCCUPATION IN INDOCHINA	
Professional	.14288*
Clerical	.06920*
Blue Collar	.08482*
VOLUNTARY AGENCY ASSIGNMENT	
USCC	-.01186
LIRS	-.00184
IRC	.00046
CWS	-.02634
HIAS	.04847
None	.03717
RESETTLEMENT INDEX (a measure of the degree of difficulty of resettlement)	-.04891*
ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH	-.01776
MILITARY STATUS	
Officer	.08070*
Enlisted man	.14582*
EDUCATION	
Completed at least high school	.11044*
(CONSTANT)	.69829
r_2 = .35380	
r^2 = .12517	

Note: For computation and utility, see text.

*Indicates significance at the .05 level.

TABLE 39

Results of Regression Analysis of Refugee Employment in 1978, Females Only

VARIABLE	B
AGE	
Under 35	.02725*
55 and over	-.02414*
MIGRATED OUTSIDE OF FAMILY	.04311
MOVED OVER STATE LINES IN PREVIOUS YEAR	-.09066*
STATE OF RESIDENCE IN 1978	
California	-.01580
Texas	.01868
OCCUPATION IN INDOCHINA	
Professional	.22803*
Clerical	.17876*
Service	.02495
VOLUNTARY AGENCY ASSIGNMENT	
USCC	-.06871*
LIRS	-.06686*
IRC	-.03424
CWS	-.03864
HIAS	-.09001*
None	.02517
RESETTLEMENT INDEX	-.09206*
ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH	.04093*
EDUCATION	
Completed at least high school	.04644*
(CONSTANT)	.41870
r =	.31667
r^2 =	.11028

Note: For computation and utility, see text.

*Indicates significance at the .05 level.

TABLE 40

Results of Regression Analysis of Refugee Employment in 1979, Females Only

VARIABLE	B
AGE	
Under 35	-.01997
55 and over	-.26644*
MIGRATED OUTSIDE OF FAMILY	.13546*
MOVED OVER STATE LINES IN PREVIOUS YEAR	-.09682*
STATE OF RESIDENCE IN 1979	
California	-.04464*
Texas	.05349*
OCCUPATION IN INDOCHINA	
Professional	.14410*
Clerical	.19096*
Service	.01161
VOLUNTARY AGENCY ASSIGNMENT	
USCC	-.06507*
LIRS	-.08629*
IRC	-.06291*
CWS	-.07453*
HIAS	.00761
None	-.05074*
RESETTLEMENT INDEX	-.09113*
ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH	.05734*
EDUCATION	
Completed at least high school	.10949*
(CONSTANT)	.46403
r = .34544	
r^2 = .11933	

Note: For computation and utility, see text.

*Indicates significance at the .05 level.

TABLE 41

Results of Regression Analysis of Refugee Employment in 1980, Females Only

VARIABLE	B
AGE	
Under 35	.02255
55 and over	-.32369*
MOVED OVER STATE LINES IN PREVIOUS YEAR	-.10648*
STATE OF RESIDENCE IN 1980	
California	-.00098
Texas	.06213*
OCCUPATION IN INDOCHINA	
Professional	.22232*
Clerical	.25546*
Service	.02040
VOLUNTARY AGENCY ASSIGNMENT	
USCC	-.04981*
LIRS	.02003
IRC	-.02625
CWS	-.04217
HIAS	-.10083*
None	-.02487
RESETTLEMENT INDEX	-.10461*
ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH	.08637*
EDUCATION	
Completed at least high school	.07913*
(CONSTANT)	.46580
r = .40665	
r^2 = .16536	

Note: For computation and utility, see text.

*Indicates significance at the .05 level.

The equations for males show the same pattern for all three years. The strongest influence on the likelihood of a male refugee being employed is the combination of occupation in Indochina, membership in the military, and education. Having been an enlisted man in the military was a particular plus for a refugee since his training seems to have been excellent preparation for employment in the U.S. Persons who had worked in the professions also entered the labor force quickly, but not as quickly as these former enlisted men. Education presented a strong influence but not so strong as occupation and military experience. In all cases, there were variations in the strength of effect of occupation, military experience, and education over the five year period but all these factors continued to operate as late as 1980.

The influence of age is also worth noting. Males in the 55 and over category were particularly unlikely to work, although lack of employment also ran proportionately high among those under 35.

Quality of resettlement also had some effect, but it was not as strong as what we saw in the analysis of secondary migration. The resettlement difficulty index produced a slight negative effect, indicating that a good resettlement experience was associated with employment.

This effect persisted throughout the period, although it declined with the passing of time. Refugees who were also secondary migrants had more than the usual amount of difficulty finding employment in their new places of residence. Refugees living in California, regardless of when they settled there, were less likely to work than those in the rest of the U.S. This trend also endured throughout the five years under study. Finally, the influence of volag is difficult to pinpoint. The coefficients are too mixed to say anything definitive about the effect of being assigned to a particular voluntary agency. However, one thing is clear. Throughout the period under study, not being assigned to a voluntary agency did not necessarily penalize a refugee in his search for employment.

The equations for females are not terribly different from those for males. Occupation and education emerged as the major influences. Age was a factor, but less so than among males; younger women were more likely to work than older women, but the impact of being 55 or older was less dramatic for women than for men. Female secondary migrants were also less likely to be employed than women who stayed put. In the early years, state of residence was not an important factor in female participation in the labor force but beginning with 1979, living in California had the same impact on women as it seems to have had on

men.

Earlier in this chapter we described how the INS and SSA data sources reported substantially different EPRs for refugees. Given those differences, we felt obliged to complement the just-reported analysis of the Evacuee/INS data file with a regression analysis of SSA data. The analysis was conducted and showed little variation from what we reported on from the Evacuee/INS File. We believe that the major differences between these two data bases are largely differences of degree, and not differences in the basic relationships among data items.

F. Conclusions

What should we conclude from all of these numbers?

First, that the 1975 refugees after five years--but not immediately--reached the EPRs of other Americans.

Second, that human capital variables (education, past work experience) exerted the strongest influence on refugee success in the U.S. labor market.

Third, it may be that an appreciable number of refugees moved into the underground labor market after only a short while.

Fourth, that refugees who were also secondary migrants in the U.S. had more difficulty finding a job than others.

Fifth, a poor resettlement experience continued to be a liability for some refugees as late as 1979.

Sixth, the relatively generous terms of refugee cash assistance in California in the period studied may have had a negative impact on labor force participation of both those who settled directly, and of those who migrated subsequently.

The policy implications are grim. If there is to be a high degree of refugee self-sufficiency (high EPRs) and if that goal is the driving force in policy-making then the nation should admit refugees with the most human capital and subsequently provide only short-term cash assistance to them.

An alternative approach, tried throughout the period under study (1975-1980), is both more humane and more expensive. It is an effort to supplement the human capital of the new arrivals through programs of linguistic and vocational training. Unfortunately we could not record the extent of these post-arrival interventions in our study, nor measure the results of those interventions. And so, we cannot say with any certainty whether such an approach will make any difference.

CHAPTER 5: EARNINGS OF THE 1975 COHORT

A. Results of Earlier Studies

Just as there are several ways to measure levels of employment within a population, so are there several ways to measure the reward received for that employment. Our measure, because it is the Social Security system's measure, is the annual earnings of individual workers. More specifically, it is earnings as reported to SSA.[59] Fortunately, there is a substantial body of data on the earnings of other populations, collected in the same manner, using the same definitions.

Other ways of measuring earnings include recording hourly wages and average hours of work in a week and then computing average weekly wages; this system is used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. IRS, understandably, focuses on income, taxable income and the like. The Census Bureau collects data on specific types of earnings, as well as total income, for both families and unrelated individuals. Most of these systems report these data in distributions and as means and/or medians. Clearly, these collections

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[59]With the exception of workers with earnings reported from more than one employer, the earnings used do not exceed the applicable SSA taxable maximums. Since the measure for the SSA tabulations used in this report is median earnings, the inclusion or noninclusion of earnings above the taxable maximum is a moot point.

of administrative data are not all compatible with one another, but since each system has extensive data on U.S. workers, any one of them can be used as a model for collecting data on a new population, such as Indochinese refugees.

A great deal of economic data on Indochinese refugees of all arrival years has been collected by OSI Unfortunately, they blithely ignore most previously-accepted earnings and income concepts, preferring their own. As a result, much of the data collected by the OSI surveys is incompatible with what is available from other sources.

OSI collects information (over the telephone) about twice a year. It records a monthly household income, and then creates a distribution with the following categories:

- Less than $200
- $200 to $399
- $400 to $599
- $600 to $799
- $800 and over

No means or medians are provided.

Sometimes (as in their Wave III report) OSI publishes monthly wages and salary data in the same manner, but more often they display their findings in the puzzling way shown in Table 42.

About all one can tell from the OSI table is that

TABLE 42

OSI Data on Income and Earnings

Monthly Vietnamese Household Income From All Sources
by Components of Income
(Percent of Dollar Contributions from Each Source)
(Weighted Percentages)

Income Level	Unweighted N	Percent of Dollar Contributions from Source			
		Contributions by Wages	Contributions by RFA*	Contributions by SSI*	Contributions by Others*
Total	637	89.9	4.7	1.7	3.7
Under $200	25	9.7	28.6	6.3	55.5
$200 to $399	30	5.9	65.2	8.0	20.9
$400 to $599	21	44.7	34.9	3.0	17.4
$600 to $799	48	69.7	18.9	6.9	4.4
$800 or more	509	92.1	3.3	1.4	3.3
Not Ascertained	4	-	-	-	-

*Assistance was reported as being received at the time of the interview.

Taken from Opportunity Systems, Inc., Indochinese Resettlement Operational Feedback, Wave Eight Report, Table 18 (data were gathered in November-December, 1979).

Note: See comment in the text regarding the utility of this format.

most of the respondents' income came from wages and salaries; further one can calculate that 80.4 percent of the households with known incomes had incomes of more than $799 a month. Over time, as Table 43 shows, the percentage of OSI households in the upper bracket increased from the first through the eighth waves and then in the ninth wave fell sharply. We suspect that this related to the lower income of the then numerous new arrivals. OSI noted the decrease in its text but offered no comments on why this had occured.

Turning to more traditional concepts, in work sponsored by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, IRS tabulated the tax returns filed by Indochinese refugees in the years 1976, 1977, and 1978 (Table 44). The tabulations show a steady progression in terms of the number of returns filed, and in the average size of the adjusted gross income reported in each year. Unfortunately this series of data was not extended beyond 1978.

In some of its later surveys, OSI included Cambodian and Loatian households as well as Vietnamese and found their monthly incomes to be below those of the Vietnamese.

TABLE 43

Percentage of Vietnamese Refugee Households With Income from All Sources of $799 or More a Month
(OSI Data)

WAVE	PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH INCOMES OF $799+	SURVEY PERIOD
I	14.9%	August-September, 1975
II	32.4	November-December, 1975
III	41.2	July-August, 1976
IV	43.9	March-April, 1977
V	51.4	July-August, 1977
VI	70.0	October-December, 1978
VII	75.6	April-June, 1979
VIII	80.4	November-December, 1979
IX	67.6	October-November, 1980

Source: Opportunity Systems, Inc., Indochinese Resettlement, Operational Feedback, Waves I through IX.

Note: Data were for a sample of all Vietnamese refugees in the nation at the time of the surveys, and do not cover just the 1975 cohort.

TABLE 44

Distribution of Refugees Filing Income Tax Returns and the Amount of their Adjusted Gross Income and Reported Tax Liability, by Income Level, 1976-1978

ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME	TAX YEAR 1976			TAX YEAR 1977			TAX YEAR 1978		
	TOTAL RETURNS	TOTAL AGI* REPORTED	TOTAL TAX REPORTED	TOTAL RETURNS	TOTAL AGI* REPORTED	TOTAL TAX REPORTED	TOTAL RETURNS	TOTAL AGI* REPORTED	TOTAL TAX REPORTED
Less Than $ 5,000	12,547	$32,313,191	$ 760,308	10,428	$25,419,187	$ 338,469	12,284	$26,495,728	$ 336,379
$ 5,000 - $ 9,999	8,698	60,021,139	3,651,657	9,823	70,832,173	4,235,940	9,463	69,736,206	4,501,112
$10,000 - $14,999	1,987	23,712,419	1,828,227	3,712	44,955,809	3,554,050	4,960	60,353,809	5,572,218
$15,000 - $19,999	422	7,104,821	712,786	1,394	23,736,190	2,292,093	2,236	38,467,732	3,888,449
$20,000 - $24,999	69	1,503,629	176,441	360	7,873,553	925,335	945	20,872,700	2,429,787
$25,000 or more	27	798,555	132,245	123	3,737,361	593,229	428	12,675,966	1,777,992
TOTAL	23,750	$125,454,754	$7,261.664	25,840	$176,554,273	$11,939,116	30,316	$228,602,141	$18,505,937
MEAN**		$5,282			$6,833			$7,299	

*AGI = Adjusted Gross Income

**Derived by dividing "Total AGI Reported" by "Total Returns"

Source: Special printout secured by agreement between Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program, HEW, and the Internal Revenue Service, July 13, 1979.

Taken from Julia Taft, David North, and David Ford, Refugee Resettlement in the U.S.: Time for a New Focus (Washington New TransCentury Foundation, 1979), p. 174.

Dunning's survey, taken early in 1981, provides a wealth of labor market data for comparison against other data available on U.S. workers.[60] Among his findings are the following:

- Male respondents worked 42.7 hours per week,and the women, 38.3. They were paid an average of $5.40 and $4.09 an hour (at a time when the minimum wage was $3.35 an hour).
- Median personal monthly income from all sources was $826 for men, $451 for women, and $618 for both sexes combined.
- Refugees aged 41 to 50 had the highest monthly incomes (when arrayed by age groups); Vietnamese individuals had higher incomes than Sino-Vietnamese ($630 vs. $585). Income patterns related directly to self-assessed English language competency.
- As regards year of arrival, the 1976 group reported the highest median individual monthly incomes ($877), followed by the 1975 group ($703), 1977 ($697), 1978 ($537) and 1979 ($473).

The results of the HHS-funded self-sufficiency study (conducted by the University of Michigan) should prove very useful in this connection. Unfortunately, they have not been released as this is written.

Although his work does not deal with refugees, per se, Barry Chiswick's studies have shown that, all else being equal, the wages of foreign-born white men rise to

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[60]Dunning, op.cit.,pp.142-155.

equal those of native-born white men after the passage of fifteen years.[61] Chiswick's work involves a retrospective view of the operations of the labor market by using Census data for various cohorts of immigrants. Similarly, David North found, in a longitudinal study of the 1970 cohort of legal immigrants to this country (using Social Security taxable earnings data) that the male immigrants studied were well on the way to parity with U.S. workers seven years after arrival, but that female immigrants had already surpassed the earnings levels of their native-born peers.[62] As we turn to our analysis of SSA earnings data for the 1975 cohort, we wonder whether these patterns will apply to refugees as well.

B. SSA Earnings Data on the 1975 Cohort

Table 45 provides a quick overview of the consistently rising earnings of the 1975 refugees in contrast to the slowly rising wages of the U.S. labor force as a whole. More precisely, it reports the taxable earnings of the best-paid male refugees (those aged 35-44), the best paid female refugees (those 25-34), all refugees, and all U.S. workers.

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[61] Chiswick, op.cit.
[62] North, David S. "Seven Years Later: The Experiences of the 1970 Cohort of Immigrants in the United States" R&D Monograph 71, Employment and Training Division, US Department of Labor, Washington, D.C. 1979. pp 65-97.

TABLE 45

Median SSA Earnings of Selected Groups of 1975 Refugees and All U.S. Workers, 1976-1979

YEAR	MALE REFUGEES 35-44	FEMALE REFUGEES 25-34	ALL REFUGEES	ALL U.S. WORKERS	REFUGEE EARNINGS AS PERCENT OF U.S. EARNINGS
1976	$6,232	$3,528	$4,243	$6,235	68.1
1977	7,928	4,659	5,460	6,627	82.4
1978	9,863	6,159	7,053	7,148	98.7
1979	12,400	7,367	8,874	7,478	118.6
Percent Increase 1976-1979*	98.0	108.8	109.1	19.9	n/a

*Unadjusted for inflation.

Sources: Refugee data from SSA tabulations. Data for the US population from Social Security Administration, Social Security Bulletin, Annual Statistical Supplement, 1982, Table 25. The concept used for both groups is median earnings subject to Social Security taxes; average taxable earnings for all US workers were running about $2,000 a year higher in 1979 than shown in this table; average earnings data were not available for the 1975 refugees, but probably were below those of US workers.

Note: The refugee-US earnings comparisons in this table should be viewed against the sex ratios of these two worker populations; whereas in 1979 the refugee worker population was 37.8% female, that of the US work force covered by Social Security was 42.7% female. (The latter percentage was calculated from Table 24 of SSA's Statistical Supplement, 1982.) For more precise age- and sex-specific earnings data, see Table 46.

The median earnings data in Table 45 indicate that the earnings of refugees were well below those of U.S. workers in 1976, but had surpassed those of U.S. workers by 1979. Those data should be read cautiously, however, because the U. S. workforce has a substantially larger proportion of women workers than the 1975 refugee workforce.

In fact, the table provides a much cruder comparison between U.S. and refugee workers than that offered by Chiswick; he factors out a range of variables for the immigrant workers and U.S. workers in his studies. We simply compare all refugees and all U.S. workers knowing that the refugee population is younger, and has a higher proportion of males than the U.S. labor force, thus tending to overstate the refugees' relative success in the labor market. Nonetheless, the big picture is clear: The median earnings of 1975 refugees were very low in 1976 and then in the following years moved beyond parity with those of all U.S. workers.

Table 46 presents a finer-grain analysis of refugees and U.S. workers between the ages of 25 and 44. (Approximately two-thirds of the refugee workers were within this age range.) By 1979, young male refugees had nearly closed the gap between themselves and comparably-aged U.S. workers. Males aged 35-44 had further to go. Both groups of female refugees, by contrast, were well ahead of female U.S. workers by 1979. Interestingly, refugee women aged 35-44, whose median earnings were about $300 less than the 25-34 year old refugee women in 1976, were earning about $300 a year more than the younger women by 1979. We have no clear evidence to explain what caused this phenomenon. A final comparison, that of median earnings for all age groups of both refugees and U.S. workers in 1979, is shown in Table 47. Again we see the greater relative progress of refugee women (vs. other U.S. women) in earnings, as compared to the progress of male refugees. In the younger four age groups, refugee women outearn U.S. women but fall behind by slim margins in the 45-54 and 55 plus groups. Male refugees earn more than their peers up to age 24, but fall behind in the four older age groups.

TABLE 46

Median SSA Earnings of Selected Groups of 1975 Refugees and U.S. Workers, by Sex 1976-1979

YEAR	MALES						FEMALES					
	REFUGEES 25-34	U.S. WORKERS 25-34	REFUGEES AS % OF U.S.	REFUGEES 35-44	U.S. WORKERS 35-44	REFUGEES AS % OF U.S.	REFUGEES 25-34	U.S. WORKERS 25-34	REFUGEES AS % OF U.S.	REFUGEES 35-44	U.S. WORKERS 35-44	REFUGEES AS % OF U.S.
1976	5,568	10,519	52.9	6,232	13,427	46.4	3,528	5,098	69.2	3,216	5,154	62.4
1977	7,202	11,130	64.7	7,928	14,512	54.6	4,658	5,511	84.5	4,537	5,560	81.6
1978	9,330	12,015	77.7	9,863	15,905	62.0	6,158	6,118	100.6	6,192	6,199	99.9
1979	11,707	12,501	93.6	12,400	16,750	74.0	7,367	6,497	113.4	7,674	6,629	115.8

Sources: Refugee data from SSA Tabulations. Data for the U.S. population calculated from Social Security Administration, Social Security Bulletin, Annual Statistical Supplement, 1982, Table 25.

Note: The concept used for both groups is earnings subject to Social Security taxes.

TABLE 47

Median SSA Earnings of 1975 Refugees and All U.S. Workers, by Sex and Age, 1979

AGE GROUP	MALES		FEMALES	
	REFUGEES	U.S. WORKERS	REFUGEES	U.S. WORKERS
16-19	$2,799	$1,716*	$2,129	$1,282*
20-24	7,401	6,493	4,698	4,363
25-34	11,707	12,501	7,367	6,497
35-44	12,400	16,750	7,675	6,629
45-54	10,960	16,985	6,985	7,142
55+	8,285	12,101	5,818	5,891

*Workers under 20.

Source: Refugee data from SSA tabulations. US data from Social Security Administration, Social Security Bulletin, Annual Statistical Supplement, 1982, Tables 24 and 25. Data for US workers 25-54 are averages of medians for workers in five-year groupings. Data for US workers 55+ are weighted averages of medians for the six 55+ age groups, calculated from population data (Table 24) and earnings data (Table 25). It should be noted that the average age of the 55+ refugees is considerably younger than that of the 55+ US workers.

Switching gears for the moment, Table 46 suggests something about the extent of the disadvantages of subpopulations in the U.S. labor market. Clearly, the 1975 cohort arrived with multiple disadvantages, but in their first full calendar year in the labor market, male refugees aged 25-44 earned more than American women in the same age group.

What factors other than sex, age and experience in the U.S. labor market appear to have influenced earnings? Did those factors appear to be as strong in 1979 as in 1976? Seven such factors are worth noting, five of which are listed in more or less descending order of importance: civilian or military status in Indochina, occupation in Indochina (about equal with military status), state of residence in the U.S., voluntary agency assignment, and size of cluster, i.e., the number of other Indochinese in the immediate area. Mobility status and self-employment are also of interest but are discussed separately.

Table 48 shows the influence of the human capital assets carried with the refugees as they arrived. Former military officers generally earned more in the U.S. than civil servants and enlisted personnel, and all public sector people made more than those with a private sector background ("other" in the table). Similarly, when the Indochinese background is arrayed in terms of occupation, men with a professional background and women with professional or

TABLE 48

Median SSA Earnings for Selected Groups of 1975 Refugees, by Sex, 1976 and 1979

VARIABLE	1976				1979			
	MALES		FEMALES		MALES		FEMALES	
	TOTAL	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY	TOTAL	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY	TOTAL	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY	TOTAL	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY
STATUS IN INDOCHINA								
Officer	$5,877	100.0%	$3,625	100.0%	$12,598	100.0%	$7,600	94.5%
Civil Servant	5,573	94.8	3,439	94.9	11,385	90.4	8,039	100.0
Enlisted	5,349	91.0	3,375	93.1	11,515	91.4	7,333	91.2
Other	4,270	72.7	2,899	80.0	9,265	73.5	6,808	85.2
OCCUPATION IN INDOCHINA								
Professional	$5,800	100.0%	3,823	100.0%	$12,258	100.0%	$8,378	100.0%
Clerical	5,114	88.2	3,773	98.7	10,972	89.5	8,011	95.6
Manufacturing	5,327	91.8	2,850	74.5	11,429	93.2	6,626	79.1
Construction	3,992	68.8	1,620*	42.4*	8,902	72.6	4,250*	50.7*
Service	5,144	88.7	2,439	63.8	10,781	88.0	6,475	77.3
Other	4,858	83.8	2,475	64.7	9,909	80.8	5,907	70.5

Source: SSA Tabulations.

*Cells had five or six members.

clerical backgrounds earned substantially more than other refugees in 1976 and again in 1979. There appears, however, to be some slight lessening of the influence of occupational (but not the civilian or military status) background with the passage of time. Not shown in the table are a similar set of findings regarding the influence of education in Indochina on earnings in the U.S. The greater the education, the higher the earnings, with education making more of a difference for men than for women. As with occupation, the effect of education was about as strong in 1979 as it had been in 1976.

While the human capital characteristics shown in Table 48 were fixed, state of residence in the U.S. was not. A 1976 resident of Oregon could become a 1979 resident of California, and vice versa. Generally, living in Illinois or Texas meant higher earnings for the men than living in California (just as residence in those states correlated with differential EPRs; see Table 49.) Interestingly, while U.S. workers in California made about 12 percent more than U.S. workers in Texas[63] the pattern was reversed among male refugees. The income patterns of women were somewhat different than those of men, with Virginia (in 1976) and New York (in 1979) recording the highest female

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[63]Calculated from Social Security Bulletin, Statistical Supplement, 1981, Table 40.

TABLE 49

Median SSA Earnings of 1975 Refugees, by Sex and State of Residence, 1976 and 1979

STATE OF RESIDENCE	1976				1979			
	MALES		FEMALES		MALES		FEMALES	
	TOTAL	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY	TOTAL	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY	TOTAL	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY	TOTAL	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY
Illinois	$5,727	100.0%	$2,960	91.9%	$9,438	100.0%	$5,553	98.9
Texas	5,327	93.8	2,901	90.1	9,278	98.3	5,489	97.8
Virginia	5,110	89.2	3,220	100.0	8,000	84.8	5,348	95.2
Other US	5,039	89.2	2,698	83.8	8,489	89.9	4,860	86.6
Pennsylvania	5,017	87.6	2,929	91.0	8,463	89.7	4,804	85.6
New York	4,886	85.3	3,148	97.8	7,518	79.7	5,615	100.0
Florida	4,852	84.7	2,720	84.5	7,539	79.9	4,892	87.1
California	4,688	81.9	2,937	91.2	8,109	85.9	5,465	97.3
Washington	4,471	78.1	1,974	61.3	8,990	95.3	4,982	88.7

Source: SSA Tabulations.

earnings. California and Texas earnings were about equal.

The data also suggest that the significance of voluntary agency assignment decreased over time, with most of the variation falling into the 93 percent - 100 percent range by 1979. (See Table 50). Males assigned to LIRS had the highest earnings in both 1976 and 1979 while that distinction, among the women, went to ACNS in 1976 and to IRC in 1979. As noted before, however, volags did not draw a random sample of the 1975 refugees, and each did not distribute their refugees evenly across the country. (A volag with a disproportionately large number of refugees in California, for example, might have lower median earnings among male refugees than if it had settled a large number in Texas.)

The narrowest range of earnings differences among these five variables can be seen in Table 51 which shows median earnings by the size of the cluster in which the refugee lived.[64] With exception of the mixed pattern for the 1976 male earnings, the trends shown in Table 51 are the expected ones: refugees earn more in areas where there are larger clusters of other 1975 refugees. Since the biggest clusters are in California, a low-earnings state, one would assume that the earnings-by-cluster patterns

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[64]Calendar year '79 earnings were linked to January 1979 residence as recorded with INS; calendar '76 earnings were linked with the destination recorded in the 1975 evacuee file.

TABLE 50

Median SSA Earnings of 1975 Refugees, by Voluntary Agency and Sex, 1976 and 1979

VOLUNTARY AGENCY	1976				1979			
	MALES		FEMALES		MALES		FEMALES	
	TOTAL	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY	TOTAL	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY	TOTAL	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY	TOTAL	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY
LIRS	$5,344	100.0%	$2,906	89.9	$11,186	100.0%	$6,835	96.4%
CWS	5,099	95.4	2,707	83.7	10,971	98.1	6,578	92.8
Tolstoy	5,098	95.3	2,749	85.0	11,118	99.4	6,790	95.8
IRC	4,953	92.7	2,972	91.9	10,980	98.2	7,091	100.0
USCC	4,916	92.0	2,755	85.2	10,431	93.3	6,595	93.0
AFCR	4,808	90.0	2,800	86.6	10,713	95.8	6,374	89.9
HIAS	4,641	86.8	2,923	90.4	10,939	97.8	6,799	95.9
ACNS	4,153	77.7	3,234	100.0	9,227	82.5	6,661	93.9

Source: SSA Tabulations.

TABLE 51

Median SSA Earnings of 1975 Refugees, by Size of Cluster and Sex, 1976 and 1979

SIZE OF CLUSTER*	1976				1979			
	MALES		FEMALES		MALES		FEMALES	
	TOTAL	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY	TOTAL	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY	TOTAL	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY	TOTAL	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY
2,000 plus	$4,960	96.0%	$3,135	100.0%	$11,365	100.0%	$7,473	100.0%
1,000-1,999	4,859	94.1	2,888	91.9	10,706	94.2	6,795	90.9
500-999	5,127	99.2	2,919	93.1	10,918	96.1	6,720	89.9
200-499	5,166	100.0	2,843	90.7	10,535	92.7	6,530	87.4
Less than 200	4,900	94.9	2,633	84.0	10,363	91.2	6,193	82.9

Source: SSA Tabulations.

*In 1979.

would show sharper differences with state of residence held constant.

One of the most interesting of the cross-tabulations (see Table 52) shows the earnings of the 1975 cohort by inter-state migration between filings of the 1978 and the 1979 INS address cards. (While mobility data are available for the periods 1975-1978 (when migriation was the most frequent) and 1979-1980 as well, income data were not available in those time frames.)

The top half of table 52 displays the income of refugees in the year of the move (1978) while the bottom half shows the income in the year after the move had taken place (1979). A number of conclusions are suggested:

- Earnings for all groups of stayers (men and women, and those staying in Texas, California or elsewhere) were higher in both years than for all groups of migrants. The more successful did not move during 1978.

- Higher earnings were reported for males staying in Texas or moving to Texas than those in other areas; patterns among the six groups of women were not so clear.

- In 1978, the subpopulations with the lowest earnings were those who moved to California, thus tending to support the grim reports of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services as outlined in Chapter 3.

- Migrants' earnings increased more between 1978 and 1979 than did the earnings of the stayers, indicating that migrants on average improved their economic lot by migrating.

TABLE 52

Median SSA Earnings of the 1975 Refugees, by 1978-1979 Interstate Migration Status and Sex, 1978 and 1979

MOBILITY STATUS	MALES	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY	FEMALES	PERCENT OF MAXIMUM CATEGORY
EARNINGS IN 1978, THE YEAR OF THE MOVE				
Stayed in CA	$8,201	81.1%	$5,543	98.4%
Stayed in TX	10,116	100.0	5,634	100.0
Stayed in Other State	8,843	87.4	5,234	92.9
Moved to CA	5,736	56.7	3,523	62.5
Moved to TX	7,000	69.2	4,112	73.0
Moved to Other State	6,559	64.8	3,573	63.4
EARNINGS IN 1979, THE YEAR AFTER THE MOVE				
Stayed in CA	11,011	89.3	7,430	100.0
Stayed in TX	12,336	100.0	7,059	95.0
Stayed in Other State	10,553	85.6	6,472	87.1
Moved to CA	9,354	75.8	6,178	83.1
Moved to TX	11,491	93.2	6,084	81.9
Moved to Other State	9,466	76.7	5,250	70.7

Source: SSA Tabulations

The first three of these comments closely parallel our previously reported findings on the interaction of secondary migration and refugee employment patterns.

A growing, but tiny minority of the 1975 refugees reported self-employment earnings to the Social Security system. In 1976 there were 156 of them, 240 in 1977, 370 in 1978 and 495 in 1979; in the last year that represented only 1.5 percent of the refugees in the SSA data bank. This is in contrast to about 7.7 percent of U.S. workers who reported self-employment earnings.[65] Among refugees, men were more than twice as likely to be self-employed as women, with the 1979 rates being 2.1 percent and 0.8 percent respectively. As with U.S. workers, self-employed people made about 20 percent less than wage and salary workers.

There have been suggestions that self-employment will become a major force within the refugee community's economy. That may be, but one could not prove it from the 1976-1979 SSA data.

As in previous chapters, we have taken the findings from the crosstabulation analysis and tested them with some regressions. The data for the regression analysis are in the form of a correlation matrix prepared by the

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[65]Calculated from Table 33 of the Social Security Bulletin, Statistical Supplement, 1981.

Social Security Administration. Unfortunately, SSA could not provide us with means and standard deviations for the sample for which the matrix was computed. As a result, the equations cannot be used to estimate annual earnings. Because of the way the matrix was developed, it is also impossible to estimate separate equations for males and females, and missing data had to be ignored. Finally, readers should note that the base case for these dummy regressions is a female who migrated within a family, was between 35 and 55 years of age, reported either no occupation or a blue collar occupation (other than service) in Indochina, was resettled by a volag other than one of the largest five, had a sponsor assigned before leaving the U.S. camp, lived outside of Texas and California, and did not move across a state boundary in the previous year. Regressions were run for both 1978 and 1979 earnings.

Despite some deficiencies in the data, the regressions produced very credible results. (See Tables 53 and 54.) The most powerful influence on earnings in both 1978 and 1979 was sex, with males achieving higher earnings than females. After the variable sex, one can pretty much rank the others in order of importance as follows: age, occupation in Indochina, mobility, state of residence, and the two settlement variables - sponsorship and volag assignment. The direction of influence is generally the same as was

TABLE 53

Results of Regression Analysis of 1978 Earnings of 1975 Refugees

VARIABLE	B
SEX	
Male	.30807*
AGE	
Under 35	-.05163*
55 or over	-.17839*
MIGRATED OUTSIDE OF A FAMILY	.04575*
MOVED OVER STATE LINES IN PREVIOUS YEAR	-.07900*
STATE OF RESIDENCE IN 1978	
California	-.05530*
Texas	.03278*
OCCUPATION IN INDOCHINA	
Professional	.09516*
Clerical	.05586*
Blue Collar	-.61088*
VOLUNTARY AGENCY ASSIGNMENT	
None	.01742*
USCC	-.00161
LIRS	.02608*
IRC	.03137*
CWS	.02382*
HIAS	.01776*
RESETTLEMENT	
No sponsor	-.01191*
(CONSTANT)	0.0**
r_2= .458	
r^2= .173	

Source: SSA Matrix

Note: For computation and utility, see text.

*Indicates significance at the .05 level.
**Means and standard deviations were not available.

TABLE 54

Results of Regression Analysis of 1979 Earnings of 1975 Refugees

VARIABLE	B
SEX	
Male	.30041*
AGE	
Under 35	-.04772*
55 or over	-.19027*
MIGRATED OUTSIDE OF A FAMILY	.05032*
MOVED OVER STATE LINES IN PREVIOUS YEAR	-.06678*
STATE OF RESIDENCE IN 1979	
California	-.03147*
Texas	.04786*
OCCUPATION IN INDOCHINA	
Professional	.10455*
Clerical	.05890*
Blue Collar	-.00379
VOLUNTARY AGENCY ASSIGNMENT	
None	.01394*
USCC	-.01147*
LIRS	.029209*
IRC	.02898*
CWS	.013177*
HIAS	.00848*
RESETTLEMENT	
No sponsor	-.01226*
(CONSTANT)	0.0**
r_2= .417	
r^2= .174	

Source: SSA Matrix

Note: For computation and utility, see text.

*Indicates significance at the .05 level.
**Means and standard deviations were not available.

indicated by the crosstabulations. Persons over 55 have particularly low earnings when compared with other age groups; persons between 35 and 55 do the best of any group. Former Vietnamese professionals do particularly well with clerical workers also earning higher wages than service workers or other blue collar workers. Further, refugees in California earned less than those in Texas in particular and the other 48 states in general. Movers did noticeably worse than stayers, not surprisng when one recalls that most moves were to California where all earnings seem to be low. Finally, the resettlement variables do not appear to have had a large effect, although those without sponsors have consistently lower earnings than those for whom sponsors were provided. (This is in contrast to our earlier finding that those without sponsors were slightly more likely to have jobs than those without.)

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of these regressions is their consistency. While there is obvious variation in the coefficients, the overall influence of individual variables remains fairly constant for both 1978 and 1979.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

While both the United States Government and refugees themselves place a high priority on refugee self-sufficiency, it is not the sole consideration in the design of refugee programs. There are other goals, traditions, and institutional restraints that are significant, many of which work at cross-purposes to the goal of early refugee economic self-sufficiency. Although this study, because of the data used, tends to focus on the characteristics and actions of refugees, it is important to remember that the economic success of refugees is only partly a result of actions by individual refugees.

It also is useful to recall some other considerations. First, our standards for selecting refugees are not designed to identify the most talented individuals or even those least likely to become public charges. While this study and others have shown that refugees with substantial human capital are more likely to succeed economically than those without, it is unlikely that U.S. refugee admissions will ever by made along such lines.[66]

Second, after refugees have arrived in the U.S. they

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[66]Some other nations, notably France, pay attention to these considerations.

are served by an extremely complex, jerry-built administrative structure. At the federal level, the Departments of State, Justice, and HHS (sometimes Education and Labor as well) are involved. At the state and local level, there is generally an extensive social services-welfare network. Finally, the private sector is represented by the federally-subsidized voluntary agencies. Each of these service providers has its own traditions and goals, some of which focus on priorities other than self-sufficiency.[67]

Third, as a nation we have decided that refugees are a seriously disadvantaged population requiring more social services and greater access to welfare programs than the general U.S. population. Thus, refugees are given cash assistance when other Americans in the same circumstances would be ruled ineligible. While the authors agree that refugee cash assistance programs are necessary, especially in the early period of resettlement, we also note that no special responsibilities accompany these special privileges. To cite one example, refugees are able to carry their refugee-specific elgibility with them wherever they go, even if they engage in secondary migration, a practice that is disconcerting to many in the government and other refugee-serving organiziations. Despite its contradictions

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[67]The Food Stamp program, for example, is designed to alleviate human hunger and maximize the domestic consumption of U.S. grown foodstuffs.

and inadequacies, it is highly likely that refugees will continue to be served by something very close to the existing system. A radical overhaul of the refugee-resettlement system is unlikely unless a truly catastrophic refugee situation develops in the near future.

In the meantime, a number of very interesting initiatives have appeared. The Refugee Act of 1980 was a remarkable step forward in the rationalization of refugee admission and resettlement policies. At a time when such activities have fallen out of favor elsewhere, the Office of Refugee Resettlement has engaged in a series of interesting and useful social experiments. They include the Cambodian Cluster Project and the Highland Lao Initiative, two projects designed to discourage secondary migration. (Both projects, which had quite different designs, sought to enhance the lives of refugees and to discourage secondary migration by building strong refugee communities. In the case of the Cambodians, this was done by planning appropriately sized communities in cities without large refugee populations. For the Highland Lao, on the other hand, job-related programs were established in 48 communities, all outside of California, to help build the viability of existing -- largely Hmong -- communities.) Further, ORR and the Department of State have shown a commendable interest in supporting basic research on the resettlement process.

What relevance do our findings have to the continuing redesign of the refugee resettlement process? Assuming that our findings regarding human capital will not be used in the selection process, we think the following are useful:

- Knowledege of English is a major economic asset to a refugee; perhaps greater investment in English instruction in the processing camps would be of value. Perhaps we should insist on a minimum level of competence before refugees in the camps are allowed to come to the States.

- Not unexpectedly, we found that a happy resettlement experience was a predictor of economic success; the first few weeks are crucial.

- Residence in California, happy or not, does not correlate with economic success; the California welfare system appeared to sap refugees' economic energies. (As noted previously, the Refugee Act of 1980 limited the extent to which refugees have extra-ordinary access to the welfare system, and the effects of that law occurred after our study period.)

- Finally, there is evidence of a growing refugee participation in the underground economy, a trend that promises to create more problems than it will solve.

APPENDIX: METHODS AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE USE OF ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS SYSTEMS FOR RESEARCH

A. Objectives

This study began with three objectives. The first was to develop a methodology for the creation of a data resource to study recent refugees to the United States. We believed that a unique and valuable research base could be constructed by merging data from several different administrative records systems. A number of different federal agencies, for example, collect data on the same individuals but for different purposes. Some agencies are concerned with where people are living, others with whether they are employed, and still others with how much money they earn. As individual data sources, the administrative records systems of federal agencies can provide valuable insights into the workings of our society. When the records of several different agencies are brought together in a single data base, the sum of the whole is indeed greater than the individual parts.

The second objective was to undertake a longitudinal study of the 1975 cohort of Indochinese refugees. We planned to create a data base under the first objective, and then to do research that would provide new information and interpretations of the resettlement experiences of the 1975

cohort. The data file we eventually created allowed us to track the 1975 refugees from Indochina through the relocation camps to destinations in the U.S. These same data also reported on the refugees' movement within the U.S., their participation in the labor force, and their gradual climb to economic self-sufficiency.

The third objective was to provide additional stimulus to the study of refugees by creating a public use tape from the data base. This tape will be made available to all scholars and policymakers with an interest in refugees. Through this vehicle, it will be possible for others to engage in more detailed analysis of a rich data base which our study has only begun to mine.

B. The Data Files

The data used in this research have come from three main sources.

1. The 1975 Indochinese Evacuee Master File. These data provided the baseline for the study. The file contains information on all refugees processed through the mainland relocation camps in 1975. Data in the file may be grouped into seven broad categories:

- **Demographic and Socioeconomic Background**

  Age
  Sex
  Marital Status
  Family Size and Status

Country of Birth
Military/Civilian Status
Occupation in Indochina
Religion
Education
Language Ability

- **Resettlement**

  State of Resettlement
  Desired State of Resettlement
  Presence of Relatives in U.S.
  Presence of Friends in U.S.
  Financial Resources

- **Sponsorship**

  Voluntary Agency
  Assignment to Sponsor
  State of Residence of Sponsor

- **Immigration Status**

  Nationality
  Immigration Status
  INS Clearance

- **Government Expenditures**

  Medical Expenditures
  Transportation Expenditures
  Other Expenditures
  Repayment Arrangements

- **Medical Evaluation**

  Disability Status
  Whether Hospitalized
  X-Ray Results
  Serology Results
  Medical Clearance

- **Administrative Data**

  Camp Assignment
  Indochina Departure Date
  Guam Departure Date
  U.S. Arrival Date
  Release Date

In addition to the above items, the Evacuee Master File (as it is referred to in the text of this report) contains the Alien Registration Number of each refugee.

The origins of this file are not entirely clear. We believe it was created under the auspices of the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) which oversaw the entire 1975 resettlement program. The contents of the file indicate that it was put together from data collected by several different agencies including the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the Department of Labor, the Department of State, and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The majority of the information for the file was collected through interviews either on Guam or in the mainland relocation camps.

When we located the data file, it was being held by the Office of Data Processing, DHHS. Portions of it were being used by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, DHHS, in a finder service being operating for newly-arrived refugees. To the best of our knowledge, no other researchers have worked with these data.

2. INS Alien Registration Cards. Up until 1981, all resident aliens in the U.S. were required to report their residence to INS. In 1978, 1979, and 1980 the Office of Refugee Resettlement, DHHS, arranged for all cards returned

by Indochinese to be made machine-readable.[1] The resulting data base provides excellent information on the geographic distribution and movement of Indochinese aliens.

While the range of data collected varied somewhat from year to year, the INS Alien Registration data provide reasonably consistent information on state of residence, zip code, nationality, date of birth, date of arrival, sex, and employment status.[2] These data also include both Alien Registration Number and Social Security Number. The former made it possible for us to link the INS data to the Evacuee Master File, thereby creating a longitudinal file with data for 1975, 1978, 1979, and 1980.

3. Social Security Administration Earnings Data. The Social Security Administration (SSA) collects data on the earnings of individual workers. Earnings summary records are prepared on all workers and include the total taxable earnings and self-employment income of covered workers for each year. Thus, these data allow the study of both labor force participation and earnings.

Our original research design called for matching the Evacuee and INS data to the SSA earnings data by reference to Social Security Numbers (SSNs). As it turned out, this

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[1] In 1981, the cards were filed by aliens, but were not processed by the Government, and hence could not be used in this study.

[2] Employment status is the least consistent item. Difficulties with it are discussed in Chapter 4.

was not possible, but SSA was able to provide us with some extremely useful grouped data for the study.

C. Creation of the Matched, Longitudinal File

When first proposed, this project was to create a longitudinal data base comprised of data from the Evacuee Master File, the three years of INS Alien Registration data, and five years (1976 through 1980) of SSA Earnings data. Because of the obvious danger to the confidentiality of individuals described in the data, we proposed that all processing required to produce the longitudinal file be conducted in government computer facilities. After the data base was complete, it could be reviewed for any disclosure problems it posed and reprocessed accordingly. All items that might allow the identification of individual refugees had to be purged from the file. That included not only obvious identifiers such as SSN, but also geographic identifiers that might make it possible to locate individual members of this small (and somewhat obvious) minority population.

1. Gaining Access to the Data Files. The first step in the matching process was to match records from the Evacuee Master File to records in each of the three INS files (1978, 1979, and 1980). Fortunately, all four files were held by ORR. Through the combined efforts of NICHD and ORR,

we obtained a computer account in the main DHHS computing facility where the actual data files were housed.

Because ORR felt a strong need to protect the confidentiality of the refugees described in both the Evacuee Master File and the INS data, they required that project staff with access to the data sign an affidavit agreeing to the following terms:

a. Project staff could work with the data in the DHHS facility, but the data could not be removed from DHHS in any form without written approval from ORR.

b. While resident at DHHS, the data were to be used by project staff only.

c. Under no circumstances were the data be be used for purposes other than those for which they were requested, namely, the statistical reporting of research findings.

d. Any research reports resulting from use of the data must be written in such a way that the identification of individuals is impossible.

e. All confidentiality edits performed prior to public release of the file require the approval of ORR.

2. Preparation of the Evacuee Master File. An initial assessment of the Evacuee Master File indicated that some extensive editing, reorganization, and recoding of the data were required to improve their usefulness. Software was written to perform these functions including the following:

a. Elimination of items that presented disclosure problems and were not necessary to the matching

process. These included names and addresses of both individual refugees and their sponsors.

b. Imposition of a uniform coding scheme for geographic identifiers.

c. Recoding of all items into numeric sequences with consistent missing value patterns.

d. Reorganization of the record structure so that topically-related items were grouped in adjacent record locations.

e. Elimination of meaningless, undocumented codes.

f Coding of uncoded items such as Voluntary Agency and state of resettlement.

Our examination of the audit trail created in this process suggested that, much like the evacuation and processing of the refugees, the data file had been constructed quickly and, in some cases, haphazardly. Widespread undocumented codes, large amounts of missing data, and inconsistencies among data items were characteristic of the file. Nonetheless, the data are an extremely valuable resource containing answers to questions that can be asked of no other existing data base.

3. Preprocessing of the INS Data. Our initial assessment of the INS data suggested that they, too, required editing. Numeric code conversion and coding of geographic identifiers were required. Since the data bases are quite large (over 150,000 records in the smallest of the three INS data sets), we also extracted from each INS year all refugees reporting

an entry date in 1975.[3]

4. Matching the Evacuee Master File to the INS Files. After all four files had been cleaned and edited, we began the matching of the 124,494 records in the Evacuee Master File to the three INS files. Initial matches were made solely on the basis of Alien Registration Numbers. The results of this initial match are presented below:

Results of Match on A-Number

Year Matched	N	Percent
All Three Years	54,287	43.6
Two Years	35,579	28.6
One Year	17,369	13.9
No Match	17,259	13.9
TOTAL	124,494	100.0

Overall, only about 14 percent of the records in the Evacuee Master File could not be matched to at least one other year; over 40 percent were matched to all three years.

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[3]In retrospect, this was probably not a wise decision. Subsequent experience with the file suggested that the dates in the file may not have been accurate in many cases. Thus, by extracting only those registrants who indicated that they had arrived in 1975, we probably missed some of the 1975 cohort and included others who had come in other years.

After the matches on A Number were made, an audit was conducted to evaluate the quality of those matches. In addition to A Number, all four files contained three common variables that could be use to verify matches: date of birth (we used only the year), sex, and nationality. Matches agreeing on none or only one of these variables were judged to be false matches. All others were considered true matches. Only these true matches were used in the research. Almost two-thirds of the original matches showed agreement on all three verification variables. Another 25 percent agreed on at least two. In the end we had 76,336 "true" matches for 1978, 66,898 for 1979, and 70,439 for 1980.

D. Analysis Files

The analytical requirements of the research, the overall size of the data base, the limited nature of project resources, and the reluctance of SSA to provide microdata forced us to construct a series of analysis files, each of which was used for different research purposes.

1. The Evacuee Master File. In the context of the research report, the Evacuee Master File refers to the original Indochinese Evacuee Master File containing 124,494 records. This file was used principally in the early stages

of the research to develop tables showing the broad distribution of characteristics in the 1975 refugee population.

2. The Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File. Except for Chapter Two, in which the entire 1975 group is profiled, our analysis focused on adults 16 and older in 1975. Thus, the first step after matching the Evacuee and INS data was to construct a file of "true" matches among adults. This yielded a data base of 65,825 records. To control processing costs associated with the analysis of a data file of this size, we decided to sample this adult file to create an analysis file of about 10,000 records. Using a rate of one in seven, we created a random sample of 9,701 records.

3. SSA Tabulations. As noted above, the original design of this research assumed that microdata from the Social Security Earnings data base could be linked to the Evacuee and INS files and provided to us for analysis. Concern for the confidentiality of taxpayers prompted SSA to refuse our request for microdata. However, they did agree to create a matched tape and provide us with hard-copy tabulations from that tape.

In principle, matching the Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File to the SSA Earnings data seemed straightforward enough.

However, we saw at least two potential problems. First, there might be some difficulty in the matching process or the SSNs contained on the INS records might often be in error. This would result in a large number of records without matches, perhaps producing a file with too few cases for an effective analysis. To protect against such an eventuality, we decided to send a larger file than the one-in-seven sample described above. Second, we were concerned about the handling of records for individuals who had matched to only one or two years of INS data. Because the tabulations were not being performed by project staff, we felt it was probably unwise to request a complex tabulation procedure to account for the missing data. (A second consideration was the impact of missing data on the correlation matrix to be created by SSA and described below.) As a result, we decided to send only the records of those adult refugees who matched to all three INS years. We also decided to send all such refugees rather than work from the sample file. The resulting data file contained 33,263 records.

As it turned out, SSA had little difficulty matching records based on SSNs. The hard-copy tables were produced and are referred to as the SSA Tabulations in the report.

4. The Evacuee/INS/SSA Longitudinal File. While the SSA Tabulations provided some extemely valuable information

both on labor force participation and on earnings, we also had hoped to acquire microdata so that a regression analysis could be performed. When SSA refused because of the disclosure problems such a file presented, we proposed that a correlation matrix be created from the file created for the SSA Tabulations. This matrix is referred to as the SSA Matrix and was used for the analyses in Chapters Four and Five.

E. Progress Toward Objectives

1. Create a Methodology for the Study of Recent Refugees to the United States. We began this project with the hope that it could stand as a model for other researchers with an interest in the study of refugees. In our more philosophical moments we hoped that the project might lead toward the gradual development (at least conceptually) of a refugee information system. While data comparable to that in the Evacuee Master File might not always be available for other refugee groups, the INS Alien Registration data and the SSA Summary Earnings data seemed to represent constant and reliable sources. As it turned out, this was not the case.

Shortly after we began work on the project, Congress decided to stop the collection of data under the Alien Registration program. Reasons given for the decision included

declining compliance, the sparse use made of the data within INS, and cost considerations. Not unexpectedly, arguments made by persons outside of INS to the effect that the Registration data were an invaluable source of information about resident aliens went unheeded.

For this project, and perhaps for others, the INS data were critical. The INS data are the sole source of our knowledge about the secondary migration experiences of the 1975 cohort. They also provided useful, though not totally reliable, data about labor force participation. More importantly, without the the INS data sets, we would not have been able to make the link between the A-Numbers in the Evacuee File and Social Security numbers required to retrieve earnings data from the SSA Earnings File.

Equally troublesome to the project was our inability to secure microdata from SSA. We naively assumed that the nobility of our purpose combined with our proposal to do all data processing in a government computing installation would overwhelm the legitimate concerns of SSA about potential disclosure of information on individual earners. The IRS, which currently has jurisdiction over the SSA data, was unimpressed. Current policy favors a strict interpretation of regulations governing disclosure. IRS allowed SSA to generate tabulations for SSNs supplied by us, but all of our requests for microdata were refused.

In the end, of course, we did create a data base in which, we feel, some valuable research was done. The process of doing it may not have lead to the development of a methodology for the study of recent refugees, but it taught us a great deal about the growing phenomenon of administrative records research.

None of the data we used were developed with an understanding that they would be made available to the general public for research. Rather, public demand for the data has created a situation in which many federal agencies now permit researchers to use administrative data bases. The research reported on here is clearly part of that trend; some first hand observations are in order.

For starters, some praise should go to both of the agencies that provided us data for this project: the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), DHHS, and the Social Security Administration. Officials of both agencies demonstrated an appreciation of the value of their data and our right to share in it. But even with willing spirits, the construction of this data base was a terribly difficult bureaucratic chore.

Take the example of the Social Security Administration as an illustration. Negotiations with SSA began immediately upon receiving word that NICHD was going to support the work. This was July, 1980. In the months following we had numerous conversations and exchanges of letters with

persons in both SSA and the Internal Revenue Service (which has actual control over the earnings file). We eventually developed a plan under which the following would occur:

a. IRS would permit SSA to match earnings data to our linked Evacuee/INS file but they would not allow this file, even with all identifiers purged, to be released for our analysis.

b. Only hard-copy tabulations would be produced from the linked file. This was the only form in which IRS would allow these data to be released. They would be subject to inspection by IRS for cell sizes that might be so small as to disclose information on individual taxpayers.

c. SSA would construct a correlation matrix from the linked file. The release of this matrix for our analysis would not present any disclosure problems.

Although not what we had hoped for, the above plan met most of our analytical needs. In January, 1982, we provided formal table specifications to SSA. In April, IRS gave its approval to the project. By August we had a contract with SSA to do the work. It specified a termination date of December, 1982. Sometime in the spring of 1983, tabulations were prepared and sent to IRS for disclosure review prior to release. In April, 1983, we received the tables we requested. This was over two years after we began to discuss the project seriously with SSA, 16 months after a formal request, four months after the termination date of our contract with SSA, and six weeks before the termination of our grant from NICHD. Eight months later, in December, we received the correlation matrix.

We've provided this little history not to criticize SSA; their efforts in our behalf were substantial. Rather, it demonstrates the sort of patience that is required of a researcher hoping to get acess to administrative records systems. We feel there are a number of factors that contribute to the difficulty of this process, most of which are not specific to SSA.

Few federal agencies have an organized data user service function. While many government agencies are willing to provide data access services to the public, few have clearly established procedures through which such access can be gained. Further, even agencies already involved in data dissemination generally do not incorporate administrative data into the library of publicly-available files. In the case of SSA, it required several months and numerous meetings to determine just who the request should be directed to, what approvals were required, and what kinds of data could be delivered.

Agency resources for dealing with data requests are almost always insufficient. Since few agencies have units with responsibility to distribute data to the public, requests for data, when approved, must be handled by agency staff with other responsiblities. Other resources, especially computer time, are often not available as well. Once ORR approved our use of the Evacuee File and the INS files,

their role from that point on was limited to supplying us with tape numbers and data set names in the main DHHS computing facility. Getting an account in the center that would give us access to the tapes required almost four months, even with the complete support of ORR and the DHHS agency that funded the research.

Similar problems plagued SSA. Once approvals were gained, it was difficult for SSA to provide the staff to do the work. Even after a staff assignment had been made, it was difficult for her to schedule her access to the computer system because of other agency requirements of the system.

Agency staff often are uncertain as to what data can be provided. There seem to be no clear guidelines for SSA staff that permit them to work with potential clients and make definitive statements as to what can and what cannot be provided. All requests seem to be handled on an ad hoc basis. At ORR where there was a greater desire to promote the research,[4] officials were happy to provide us with the data but were unsure as to what they should require by way of confidentiality safeguards.

Agencies may be unable to deliver data in a form that meets the user's needs. Because agencies are not prepared to deliver administrative data to the public, the process

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[4]ORR's interest was greater than SSA's for the simple reason that the results of the research may have direct application to ORR programs for serving refugees.

of preparing public use data and the mode in which they are delivered may not be ideal to the end user. Production of our tables by SSA seemed to require a great deal more data processing than we would have thought necessary. Options in terms of table formatting are certainly substandard by comparison with packages familiar to many users such as SAS or SPSS. The correlation matrix, created with SPSS on a UNIVAC system, was written to tape using an EBCDIC coding that required several days of work before it could be read by SPSS in an IBM environment.

Documentation is generally poor. It has been said that working with federal administrative data is a little like finding data in the street. The case of the Evacuee Master File is illustrative. Documentation for the data consisted of a record layout and some scattered documents that describe how some of the data items were coded. There is also an oral tradition, particularly among former members of the IATF, that provides some useful interpretation of data items.

From a technical point of view, we found the file to be poorly designed and somewhat difficult to use. Many items had been coded with alphabetic codes, missing values coding was inconsistent and confusing, some items were not coded at all, and it does not appear that the data were ever adequately verified. Thus, we found it necessary to do considerable cleaning of the file, including widespread

code conversion, before using it.

None of the other data files we used were adequatey documented. Documentation for the INS files consisted of the structure section of a COBOL program written to read the data. It was not even clear which structures applied to which data files. We resolved some of our questions by comparing the data with specimen Registration Cards. Finally, we had considerable difficulty learning from SSA just who was included in the file, and whether earnings over the SSA maximum were entered into the system.

Current Data are often not available. SSA ran our tabulations in early 1983, but 1979 was the last year for which we could get data. Further, our hunches about the declining labor force participation of some refugees were challenged by SSA on the grounds that even the 1979 data may have been incomplete at the time our tabulations were performed.

2. Undertake a Longitudinal Study of the 1975 Cohort of Indochinese Refugees. Our principal aim under this objective was to provide a new look at this group of Indochinese and to contribute to the emerging literature describing their resettlement experience. We feel we achieved that both by performing and reporting on the research and by placing our findings in the context of the findings of other researchers in the field. The report itself is the

best indicator of how well this objective was met.

3. Provide a Stimulus for Future Study by Creating a Data Resource. A public use tape has been created and is available to the general public. As part of its concern for the confidentiality of 1975 refugees, ORR required that only the one-in-seven sample (Evacuee/INS Longitudinal File) be released. It was also edited so that it no longer contains five-digit zip codes.

A copy of the tape along with documentation may be obtained by contacting either of the following:

Janet Vavra
Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research
University of Michigan
426 Thompson
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Linda Gordon
Office of Refugee Resettlement, DHHS
1229 Switzer Bldg.
330 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20201